



Improve Your Sleep Naturally

A good night's sleep is one of the most important ways that you can improve your health, energy, and cognitive ability. This Worksheet can give you some insight into why your sleep may not be as restful as it should be and provide you with some suggestions to improve your sleep quality. I hope this Worksheet will help you gain the rejuvenating sleep that we all deserve. ~Kathy

Keep a sleep journal for one week (example below). Note times you went to bed and woke in the morning, what you did one hour before going to bed, what time was your last meal or snack, and rate your sleep. After one week, pick at least one item that might be interrupting your sleep and try to alter it.

Habits that interrupt sleep:

1. Eating or drinking after dinner and before sleep
2. Computers or TV one hour before sleep
3. Workout less than three hours before sleep
4. Light in the bedroom (clock, streetlight, nightlight)
5. Bedroom or bedclothes are too warm
6. Bedmates/animals interrupting sleep
7. Erratic bedtimes and rising times



Example of Sleep Diary and Planning Worksheet:

Date	Bedtime (night before)	Rising Time	Rate your Sleep (1 to 5 – 5 being a great night's sleep)	Habit (see list above)	Solution (see attached list)
Ex, 1/15 Sat	1:00 am	9:30	2	1, 4, 7	1, 2, 13, 14, 11

Habits that Optimize Sleep

1. **Eat a moderate protein dinner with some starchy vegetable carbs, a little whole grain, or fruit as part of the meal.** This can provide the L-tryptophan needed for your melatonin and serotonin production. The carbs will help the L-tryptophan cross the blood brain barrier. Carbs with dinner will provide enough glycogen to be stored in the liver and muscles to stoke the fat burning during deep sleep.
2. **Do not eat after dinner.** Snacks will raise your blood sugar and delay sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low (hypoglycemia), you may wake up and be unable to fall back asleep.

3. **Get to bed as early as possible.** Your body (particularly your adrenal system) does a majority of its recharging between the hours of 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. In addition, your gallbladder dumps toxins during this same period. If you are awake, the toxins back up into your liver, which can further disrupt your health. Prior to the widespread use of electricity, people would go to bed shortly after sundown, as most animals do, and which nature intended for humans as well.
4. **Don't change your bedtime.** You should go to bed and wake up at the same times each day, even on the weekends. This will help your body to get into a sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep and get up in the morning.
5. **Establish a bedtime routine.** This could include meditation, deep breathing, using aromatherapy or essential oils or indulging in a massage from your partner. The key is to find something that makes you feel relaxed, then repeat it each night to help you release the tensions of the day.
6. **Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed.** This will reduce the likelihood of needing to get up and go to the bathroom, or at least minimize the frequency.
7. **Go to the bathroom right before bed.** This will reduce the chances that you'll wake up to go in the middle of the night.
8. **Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed.** When your body temperature is raised in the late evening, it will fall at bedtime, facilitating slumber. The temperature drop from getting out of the bath signals your body it's time for bed.
9. **Wear socks to bed.** Feet often feel cold before the rest of the body because they have the poorest circulation. A study has shown that wearing socks reduces night waking. As an alternative, you could place a hot water bottle near your feet at night.
10. **Wear an eye mask to block out light.** It is very important to sleep in as close to complete darkness as possible. That said, it's not always easy to block out every stream of light using curtains, blinds or drapes, particularly if you live in an urban area (or if your spouse has a different schedule than you do). In these cases, an eye mask can be helpful.
11. **Put your work away at least one hour before bed (preferably two hours or more).** This will give your mind a chance to unwind so you can go to sleep feeling calm, not hyped up or anxious about tomorrow's deadlines.
12. **No TV right before bed.** Even better, get the TV out of the bedroom or even completely out of the house. It's too stimulating to the brain, preventing you from falling asleep quickly. TV disrupts your pineal gland function.
13. **Turn off all electronics an hour before bed.** The blue light from computers, pad, and smart phones tells your pineal gland that it is time to wake up by blocking melatonin secretion.
14. **Listen to relaxation CDs.** Some people find the sound of white noise or nature sounds, such as the ocean or forest, to be soothing for sleep. An excellent relaxation/meditation option to listen to before bed is the Insight audio CD. Another favorite is the Sleep Harmony CD, which uses a combination of advanced vibrational technology and guided meditation to help you effortlessly fall into deep delta sleep within minutes. The CD works on the principle of "sleep wave entrainment" to assist your brain in gearing down for sleep.
15. **Read something spiritual, uplifting, or boring.** This may help you relax. Don't read anything stimulating, such as a mystery or suspense novel, which has the opposite effect. In addition, if you are really enjoying a suspenseful book, you might be tempted to go on reading for hours, instead of going to sleep!
16. **Journaling.** If you often lay in bed with your mind racing, it might be helpful keep a journal and write down your thoughts before bed. Personally, I have been doing this for 15 years, but prefer to do it in the morning when my brain is functioning at its peak and my cortisol levels are high.
17. **Reduce or avoid as many drugs as possible.** Many drugs, both prescription and over-the-counter, may adversely effect sleep. In most cases, the condition causing the drugs to be taken in the first place can be addressed by following guidelines elsewhere on my web site.
18. **Avoid caffeine.** At least one study has shown that, in some people, caffeine is not metabolized efficiently, leaving you feeling its effects long after consumption. So, an afternoon cup of coffee or tea will keep some people from falling asleep at night. Be aware that some medications contain caffeine (for example, diet pills).
19. **Avoid alcohol.** Although alcohol will make you drowsy, the effect is short lived and you will often wake up several hours later, unable to fall back asleep. Alcohol will also keep you from entering the deeper stages of sleep, where your body does most of its healing.

20. **Make certain you are exercising regularly.** Exercising for at least 30 minutes per day can improve your sleep. However, don't exercise too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake. Studies show exercising in the morning is the best if you can manage it.
21. **Lose excess weight.** Being overweight can increase your risk of sleep apnea, which can seriously impair your sleep.
22. **Avoid foods you may be sensitive to.** This is particularly true for sugar, grains, and pasteurized dairy. Sensitivity reactions can cause excess congestion, gastrointestinal upset, bloating and gas, and other problems.
23. **Have your adrenals checked by a good holistic practitioner.** Scientists have found that insomnia may be caused by adrenal stress.
24. **If you are menopausal or peri-menopausal, get checked out by a good holistic practitioner.** The hormonal changes at this time may cause sleep problems if not properly addressed. Ask me about my program; "Turn Your MenoPause into MenoGo".
25. **Separate sleeping rooms if bedmates are disturbing your sleep.** Recent studies suggest, for many people, sharing a bed with a partner (or pets) can significantly impair sleep, especially if the partner is a restless sleeper or snores. If bedfellows are consistently interfering with your sleep, you may want to consider a separate bedroom.
26. **Expose yourself to morning light within an hour of waking.** This is the time you want your pineal gland to shut down melatonin production, telling your body it is time to get up and get going. This even works on a cloudy morning, but bright sunshine is always refreshing to the body.
27. **Supplement with herbs, melatonin, or HGH promoters.** Sometimes you may need a little help to get into a sleep rhythm. Rather than using pharmaceutical medications that force sleep, try using some natural sleep enhancers for a short period of time to get your body into the sleep routine. See me for some good ideas on dosages and combinations of supplements.

Resources:

- Mercola.com
- [*Rem Rehab* by Kevin Geary](#)
- [*The Belly Fat Effect* by Mike Mutzel](#)
- [*Mastering Leptin* by Byron Richards](#)

