140 Ways to Better Sleep

“Fatigue makes cowards out of all of us” -Vince Lombardi

To look better, think better, lose weight, and have more energy – you just need one thing: SLEEP! This is the time when our body rest and heals. Nothing takes its place. Ask any doctor! Do you want help managing your weight? Want to reduce aging? Want to accomplish more each week? Want a better chance of living a happier, healthier, wealthier life? Start with at least seven hours of high-quality sleep every night. Eight is even better!

I’ve spent the last ten years studying and practicing ways to sleep better. You’ll find many practical sleep enhancement solutions in 140 Ways to Better Sleep, perhaps even some you may have already heard of. Solutions that work at home and while you’re traveling.

Husbands, you may want to keep this little fact in mind everyday: When wives get a lousy night of sleep, the next day is not so dreamy for either partner. Both of you will feel more criticized or ignored by your spouse, and less valued than usual. Researchers don’t know why it happens . . . or why it doesn’t happen when guys sleep poorly -- but it doesn’t.

Here’s to a great night of sleep for everybody!

1. Unless you regularly replace your pillows or toss them in the dryer, you’re inhaling dust mites along with their feces and saliva all night long. Experts say you can wake up with allergies, puffy eyes, a stuffy head, or asthma. The fix: Put dust-proof covers on your pillows and mattress, and fluff your pillows and comforters in the dryer twice a month for 10 minutes to kill the dust mites.

2. If you’re watching your weight, it’s better to get the sleep you need than to wake up early and work out. According to the Journal of Epidemiology, people who slept seven or more hours a night put on less weight over 16 years than people who slept only six hours a night – even if the people who slept less worked out. The less sleep people got the more weight they gained – no matter how much they exercised. Why? Because a lack of sleep impacts the hormones that regulate appetite. In plain English – if you’re tired, you get hungrier and eat more. If you want to exercise, go to bed earlier so you can get at least seven hours a night.

3. The elderly need just as much sleep as younger adults in their 20s. At least seven to eight hours nightly. In fact, a lack of sleep as you age can bring on significant cognitive decline. Meaning, you’ll get senile sooner.
4. Several studies have found that insomniacs tend to underestimate the amount of good sleep they get by as much as an hour! So rest easy. You’re getting more sleep than you think you are.

5. Get up at the same time each day to develop a regular sleep pattern.

6. Take a break between studying and going to bed. A busy mind takes time to wind down before it can sleep.

7. Expose your children to bright light for an hour after they wake up. It'll reset the body clock so kids get sleepy earlier, and are more willing to go to bed.

8. Dim the lights 2 hours before bed.

9. Avoid caffeine after 2PM.

10. Take a warm/hot bath.

11. Make your bedroom cool and dark. Use “room darkening” blinds or curtains if needed. The combo signals your body to step up production of sleep-inducing melatonin.

12. Run for your life. Or walk, bike, dance, play tennis. Daytime physical activity helps you sleep better at night. Just leave at least 2 hours between exercise and bedtime.

13. Put your electronic toys to bed early. Turn 'em off an hour before bedtime. The flickering light from the screens of computers, cell phones, and TVs keeps your brain in wake-up mode.

14. Try a different size/thickness/style of pillow.

15. Analyze your mattress. It may be time for an upgrade.

16. If achy, take a pain reliever with a sleep aid.

17. Read a chapter from a book.

18. Got Restless Leg Syndrome? New research suggests that nothing alleviates the condition like an orgasm. It’s true!

19. Wake up near the same time- only slightly later on weekends.

20. Avoid naps longer than 20 minutes.

21. Avoid lounging in bed after the alarm goes off.

22. Spend more time outside during the day.

23. Get fresh air for a few minutes.

24. Drop the temperature a degree or two if you get hot easily.
25. Sleep in a bed as often as possible.
26. Avoid doing daily tasks/work on your bed.
27. Talk to someone you trust about any worries.
28. Limit activity near bedtime.
29. Streamline simple preparations for tomorrow.
30. Enjoy a warm beverage. For those who love coffee, research.
31. Avoid sugary drinks after work.
32. Do simple stretches or yoga.
33. Try deep breathing exercises.
34. Focus on relaxing, not sleeping.
35. Turn off your computer.
36. Avoid checking your cell phone.
37. Put your phone on Silent mode.
38. Avoid sleeping with a ceiling fan on if you get dry mouth.
39. Listen to your favorite slow song in bed.
40. See a sleep doctor for extraordinary insomnia.
41. Minimize noise near the bedroom at night or wear earplugs.
42. Move animals/electronics from near a bedroom.
43. Wear a jaw supporter and use an anti-snoring pillow if snoring is an issue.
44. Cuddle with a person or body pillow.
45. Use the restroom often before bed to avoid waking up.
46. Avoid or eliminate smoking.
47. Drink a small glass of milk.
48. Eat less than a handful of crackers before bed if you need a snack.
49. Try an air purifier for sensitive allergies.
50. Do not allow pets on bedding.
51. Drink more water during the day.
52. Face your clock away from view.
53. Ease leg or back pain by using more pillows, not thicker pillows.
54. Use lower watt lighting in the bedroom than the rest of the house.
55. Try soothing, continuous “white noise” like a fan or air sanitizer.
56. Meditate.
57. Play a CD or Playlist of soothing music if you need noise.
58. Avoid sleeping pills.
59. Seek treatment for addictions and withdrawals.
60. Unless prescribed, avoid taking OTC medicine nightly.
61. Try to sleep with your chin more upward to open air passages.
62. Ask for a more stable work schedule, if you do shift work.
63. Avoid vitamins or supplements before bed, some contain caffeine.
64. Make a “To Do” list and follow through daily.
65. Seek medical attention for chronic pain.
66. Address worries or conflicts before sunset.
67. Put on a long, boring movie if you need noise or light.
68. Take time to unwind if exhausted, but do not nap.
69. If your partner snores, invest in ear plugs.
70. Tell your partner if they disrupt your sleep regularly.
71. Invest in separate beds (in the same room) if your partner prefers a different firmness
72. If you prefer to sleep together, try a larger bed.
73. Rearrange the bedroom.
74. Allow only your partner in bed, no children.
75. If you must get up for children, plan accordingly.
76. Lose excess weight.
77. Use nasal strips if congested.
78. Try rinsing your throat or nose with saltwater if congested.
79. Relax with a hot towel on your face.
80. Find more comfortable sheets or bedding.
81. Prepare for sleep 1-2 hours before you intend to sleep.
82. Remember and analyze dreams if they are stressful or negative- address the underlying problem.
83. Prioritize your life to avoid stress/conflicts.
84. Use, and then extinguish scented candles for relaxation.
85. Evaluate how much sleep you need- and schedule it.
86. Avoid using a loud ringing alarm to shock you awake.
87. Wear socks to bed, studies show that it reduces waking at night.
88. Keep a journal to express yourself and reduce stress.
89. Be aware of & treat any hormonal/physical changes (menstruation, menopause.)
90. Avoid over sleeping- a consistent schedule is more important than “catching up.”
91. Take natural Melatonin on occasion if needed.
92. Avoid “burrowing” in the winter and get outside.
93. Get creative and express yourself during the day.
94. Find your “happy place.”
95. De-stress and make a list of things you’re thankful for.
96. Promote sleep by de-cluttering your bedroom.
97. Paint your bedroom a soft color that does not reflect light.
98. Catalog recurring dreams and identify the pattern/concern.
99. Take a vacation to reboot and set your circadian rhythms back.
100. Stop discussing or mentally reviewing work once you leave the office.

101. Laugh more—studies show it helps increase melatonin.

102. Schedule more sleep if you feel as though you may be getting sick.

103. If your partner is a cover hog, bring a second blanket to bed or use two twin blankets, one for each of you!

104. Do not count sheep; visualize yourself walking around your happy place.

105. If you wake up at night, keep lights and electronics off; do not over-stimulate.

106. TMJ can be helped by using a jaw supporter.

107. Find a new “security blanket” to sleep with or keep near.

108. Request that family and friends refrain from calling after certain hours.

109. Face your bed towards a window.

110. If your partner wakes up early, ask that they get ready outside the bedroom.

111. Sleep in pajamas instead of baggy clothes; this helps distinguish “sleep time.”

112. When you travel, turn the thermostat up a degree or two. A warmer environment helps you stay asleep better in a new environment.

113. Use a soothing scented detergent to wash bedding, as opposed to invigorating scents.

114. Sleep in a guest room on occasion if your room is not conducive to sleep.

115. Maintain a regular work-shift pattern if you can, and try to avoid nighttime shifts. Research has shown that if a person’s shift time changes too frequently, they become more tired and less effective. Also, working regular night shifts has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease and breast cancer.

116. If you read, try to avoid any materials that use vivid imagery or critical thinking.

117. Read all your medicine before taking them. Some side effects could keep you awake.

118. Wash your face in warm water.

119. Do something you usually feel is boring.

120. Warm your core with a heating pad.

121. Reach out to family members to see if any sleep disorders/troubles are common and fixable.

122. Recognize disruptive patterns preventing you from sleep.
123. Consider asking your doctor about using a CPAP machine if you stop breathing during the night or try using a jaw supporter.

124. If you do wear a CPAP, make sure you know how to wear the equipment properly.

125. Wash your hands more often to reduce germs. Getting sick can throw off your body’s natural clock.

126. Get a massage.

127. Consider trying a chin strap to keep your mouth closed and reduce snoring.

128. Do more mentally challenging activities during the day such as Crosswords, Sudoku, riddles.

129. For those who suffer from repetitive bad dreams, consider a dream catcher.

130. Sing yourself a lullaby.

131. Try relaxing in a rocking chair, the repetitive motion aids sleep.

132. Try curling your toes for a few seconds, then releasing. Contract then release all major muscle groups, to release any extra tension.

133. Control your sugar intake so that you do not “crash” then wake up mid night.

134. Try waking up to more peaceful/happy music as an alarm.

135. If you have small children, read to them until they fall asleep.

136. If you don’t have a porch but want fresh air, slightly crack a window.

137. Stare at the moon.

138. Try sitting in a massage chair. Babies often fall asleep in cars due to the vibrations, so the massage chair may help you without having to drive.

139. Wake up earlier in the morning.

140. Kiss your spouse goodnight and then breathe deeply. Slow, rhythmic breathing prepares you to rest. If deep breathing turns to heavy breathing (yep, sex) you’ll both relax and sleep even better. The next day should be sweet, too.

5 Foods That Help You Sleep Better

Here’s an important strategy to live younger and longer: Get enough sleep. Insomnia -- or even just getting less than 6 hours of good sleep a night -- increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, and viral infections, but snoozing seven to eight hours can make you look younger.
Did you know humans die earlier without sleep than they do without food? Fortunately, food could be the solution to your sleep problems. A couple of hours before bedtime, curl up with one of the following sleepy-time snacks that get your brain to release sleep-friendly chemicals.

**Almonds:** A handful contains muscle-relaxing magnesium and sleep-inducing tryptophan, which increases the brain's level of feel-good serotonin. They’re one of the healthiest foods that help you sleep better.

**Bananas:** Beneath the peel is a trifecta of soothers: serotonin, magnesium, and melatonin, your body's natural sleep regulator.

**Skim milk:** Mom was right -- a warm glassful will help you sleep better. The milk's tryptophan has a sedating effect. Plus, the calcium helps your brain use that tryptophan.

**Oatmeal:** Oats are rich in sleep-regulating melatonin. If you drizzle just a little honey on top, it tells your brain to turn off orexin, a neuropeptide linked to alertness.

**Whole-wheat bread:** A slice of toast dotted with banana slices releases insulin, which helps tryptophan get to your brain. There it changes into serotonin and whispers, "Sweet dreams."

Mix and match the following for additional foods that help you sleep better:

**Banana-Walnut Oatmeal**- Walnuts, like almonds, contain sleepy-time tryptophan.

**Oatmeal & Whole Wheat Bread**- Serve up a warm slice to help your body relax before heading to bed.

**Bagel with Almond Butter and Banana Slices on Top!** - This grab-and-go breakfast can double as a soothing bedtime snack.

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