



**8 Steps to
a Better
Nights
Sleep**

A good night's sleep really does make everything feel better. Rather than turning to straight to supplements and superfoods, I always make sure my clients are **sleeping optimally** when they are dealing with health complaints.

Whether you have difficulty falling or staying asleep or just wake up feeling like you are stuck to your mattress, there are **several steps** you can take to improve your whole sleep experience.

When we don't sleep well, this can negatively impact our mental health, **hormonal balance**, cellular repair, appetite and metabolism. Studies have even shown that long term sleep issues and circadian rhythm imbalances have been linked to dementia, depression, obesity and even **breast cancer!**

In this guide I am sharing **8 top tips** to help you enjoy the best sleep of your life!

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#1 Create a Sleep Routine

Sleeping & waking up at similar times everyday, can help establish regular **sleep patterns**. Our body loves patterns and routines! Although this may be difficult at first, the body will adapt to learn at what time to release hormones that cause alertness during the day and sleepiness at night. Ideally we want to be in bed asleep no later than **10.30pm!** Using a journal to write down thoughts, and actions to do for the following day can help to reduce anxiety, which can cause insomnia. Avoid working late into the evenings and instead take an hour or two to **wind down**, read a book and enjoy a herbal tea. Valerian, chamomile, lavender and lemon balm are well known for their relaxation and sleep promoting benefits!

#2 Turn off the Devices

The **artificial blue light** emitted by electronic devices can inhibit the release of the night time hormone melatonin, which causes sleepiness. Therefore we should avoid these devices at least one hour before going to sleep. Reduce screen brightness in the evening, turn on **Night Shift** on your iPhone settings and download 'f.lux' for laptop or PC, to prevent the blue light being emitted (These can all be installed free of charge) A room that is pitch black is more suited for better quality sleep, use an eye mask and black out curtains if you live near a busy road or a well lit area. I also recommend purchasing a pair of amber coloured '**blue light blocking glasses**' on Amazon, to wear in the evenings. Instead of scrolling on your phone or binge-watching Netflix for hours, spend some time connecting with a loved one, reading or journaling.

#3 Get some Sunlight

Exposing yourself to **natural sunlight** during the day can help regulate sleep patterns and therefore enhance quality of sleep. Light causes the body to become more alert and produce daytime hormones that can help regulate the body's own **sleep cycles**. If you spend a lot of time indoors, make an attempt to expose your body to light during break time opportunities.

Purchasing an alarm clock which emits light rather than sound (such as the Lumie) can be particularly useful for helping regulate the body's own **natural clock** and may be helpful for those with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). As soon as you wake up in the morning, open your curtains wide or **head outside** for a 5-10 minute walk. If you live in a dark area, consider purchasing a **light therapy lamp** to use whilst you are getting ready in the morning or working from your desk.

#4 Move your body!

Exercise causes physical exertion on the body, which makes it **easier to fall asleep** at night. Working out early in the morning rather than the evening is particularly useful as it will be easier to unwind at night. The endorphins released during exercise will also help fight against the effects of stress, which can often prevent us from getting quality sleep. My favourite forms of exercise are strength training and **walking**, especially if you are currently dealing with hormonal imbalances. Keeping active during the day is also very important, especially if you have a **sedentary job**. A lot of people find 10-15 minutes of yoga in the evenings, before bed, to be particularly beneficial as this combines gentle movement with **stress relieving techniques**.

#5 Limit Caffeine Intake

Caffeine can exhibit **stimulatory effects** for up to 12 hours (even longer in individuals who are slow metabolisers)! Therefore even an early afternoon cup of coffee can be responsible for keeping you awake at night. Try to consume any caffeinated drinks **before lunchtime** and try nutrient packed smoothies and herbal teas in the afternoons as a caffeine free energy boost. For most people, I don't recommend more than two cups of coffee or caffeinated tea per day as more than this can be too taxing on our **adrenal glands**. My favourite **non-caffeinated herbal teas** are holy basil (tulsi), nettle, ginger, chamomile, rooibos and spearmint. Avoid drinking these too close to bedtime though as you may need to pee during the night!

#6 Create a Sleep Sanctuary

The bedroom should be primarily used for sleeping, sex and **relaxation**. Any entertainment or work should not be done in the bedroom. This association of bed with only sleep can help promote a higher quality of sleep. **Adding plants**, water streams and dimming lights can all help create a **serene environment**. Using essential oils such as lavender/chamomile in a **diffuser** can also help create a better environment for sleep. If you struggle with insomnia, try not to lay in your bed awake for hours on end, as your body can start to associate sleep with being awake. Try getting up and moving into another **dark room** for a while until you get tired again. Stay off your phone and read a book or meditate instead!

#7 Keep it cool

The ideal sleeping temperature falls anywhere between **60 and 67 degree Fahrenheit**, and as you sleep your body temperature lowers naturally. Introducing your body to a cooler environment helps stimulate sleep and allows you to cycle naturally through the sleep stages.

Temperatures outside this range **can disrupt your REM** (rapid eye movement) stage, which is a restorative phase of our sleep and possibly where our brain processes many of our experiences. Disruptions in this stage can force you to try and catch back up, resulting in grogginess and a sense of being tired even if you feel you got enough sleep. I recommend you **sleep naked** if possible as this is how we evolved as humans. Wearing thick or restrictive PJ's can lead to a restless sleep, as can too many cushions or blankets.

#8 Regulate Blood Sugar Levels

When we are on a **blood sugar rollercoaster** throughout the day, this can continue on into the night, preventing you from getting high quality, restorative sleep. Eating **too much sugar**, carbohydrates, fruit juices, fizzy drinks and processed foods can lead to blood sugar imbalances. If you **wake several times** during the night, this may be an indication that your blood sugar levels are fluctuating. Our body produces the stress hormone, **cortisol**, when this happens. I recommend consuming your last meal at least 2-3 hours before bed, as a heavy meal can prevent your body getting into a deep sleep state. If you continue to feel hungry or wake frequently during the night, try consuming **a small snack** such as a handful of cashew nuts or a tablespoon of coconut butter, an hour before bed, as these can help to keep blood sugar levels stable until breakfast.

If you have implemented all these recommendations and you are **STILL** struggling with your sleep or energy levels, there could be other **underlying imbalances** driving this.

Chronic stress, adrenal dysregulation, hormone imbalances, thyroid issues, nutrient deficiencies, chronic gut infections, heavy metal toxicity and environmental stressors could all be **important factors** to investigate.

If you require more specific recommendations and would like 1-on-1 help you can apply to work with me as a client. I also offer a **free 30 minute Hormone Troubleshooting call** for those ladies who have a few more questions to ask before signing up for monthly coaching calls.



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