

# H1: How to Get Better Sleep Naturally: 8 Helpful Tips

## Meta description:

Struggling with how to get better sleep? With a few lifestyle tweaks, you can improve your sleep quality. Practice these good sleep habits and see for yourself.

Does crummy sleep have you dragging yourself through the day? If you're one of the 50-70 million Americans dealing with chronic sleep issues, the struggle is real. (1)

Your sleep quality affects everything from your energy levels, emotional balance, hormones, productivity, and *even* your appetite. Research shows many chronic conditions, including obesity, heart disease, and depression, are associated with poor sleep. (2)

Getting a good night's sleep may seem elusive when you're wide-awake staring at the ceiling. However, simple tweaks to your environment and daily routine can reap huge benefits when it's time to doze off.

Here are eight tips for how to get better sleep naturally:

## H2: Tip #1: Get Plenty of Bright Light Exposure

The secret to snoozing soundly is getting in sync with your body's natural sleep-wake cycles, aka your circadian rhythm.

One of the best ways to give your body's internal clock a tune-up is to increase your exposure to bright light. *Natural* light. Morning sun has the most dramatic effects, as it tells your body to lower melatonin production, helping you wake up.

Whenever possible, try to get morning sun within an hour upon waking. Have fun with it! You can:

- Take your dog for a morning walk.
- Enjoy your coffee on the patio.
- Exercise outside.
- Do some gratitude journaling on the porch.

How much morning light is right? Thirty minutes tends to be the sweet spot. But even 10-15 minutes will yield benefits.

As you go about your day, try to inject natural light whenever you can. Eat your lunch outside. Go for a walk after work. Chat on the phone in your backyard. The more sun you see during the day, the more in sync your internal clock will be.

Live in an area where sunlight is scarce? Invest in a lightbox as a handy backup for those cloudy days.

## **H2: Tip #2: Exercise Helps – But Timing is Key**

Research shows that regular exercise helps you fall asleep faster and improves sleep quality. (3) While moderate to vigorous exercise has the greatest effects, even going for a short walk can do wonders for your sleep.

Want to intensify those sleep effects? Take your workouts outside. The dose of sunlight will aid your internal clock, while the fresh air and nature will ease your stress.

Word to the wise -- avoid vigorous workouts in the evening. Since exercise can be stimulating, late-night workouts may interfere with your sleep. Try to avoid intense workouts 3 hours before bed. On the flip side, doing calming yoga or light stretching can help unwind your body and mind for bed.

## **H2: Tip #3: Create an Ideal Sleep Sanctuary**

When it comes to quality sleep, environment matters. An ideal sleep sanctuary should be three things: dark, cool, and quiet. Here's how to set up a sleep cave for success:

### **H3: Keep it Dark**

Darkness triggers your body to increase the sleep hormone melatonin. Even small amounts of light can inhibit melatonin production.

Ideally, you want your bedroom to be as pitch black as possible. Here's how to do that:

- Invest in blackout curtains.
- Cover your alarm clock with a T-shirt or put it in a drawer.
- Cover lights from electronic devices and smoke alarms with a piece of electrical tape.
- Traveling? Pack a sleep mask.
- Bright light late in the day confuses your body's circadian rhythm. Dim the lights in the evening or use lamps or candles instead.

### **H3: Cool it Down**

Research shows room temperature is one of *the* most critical factors for quality sleep. (4)

- The ideal sleep temperature is around 65 degrees Fahrenheit. (5) But anything between 60-72 degrees will do.
- Too cold for you? Reducing the temperature even a few degrees will trigger your body's circadian rhythm.
- Lower your thermostat two hours before bedtime. This signals your body that it's time to wind down.

### H3: Silence is Golden

Is a dog, noisy neighbor, or partner's snoring interfering with your sleep?

- Purchase a white noise machine or turn on a fan to drown out background noise.
- Still loud? Sleep with earplugs.

## H2: Tip #4: Watch What You Eat & Drink (*and when*)

Being choosy with what you eat and drink can reap rewards when it's time for bed. Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind:

- **Avoid drinking caffeine late in the day.** Research has found consuming caffeine even 6 hours before bedtime can interfere with your sleep. (6) If you crave coffee in the afternoon, go for decaf.
- **Don't drink alcohol just before bed.** While having a drink may help you doze off, you'll pay the price later. Alcohol suppresses your melatonin production, causing interrupted sleep. (7)
- **Limit your liquids in the evening.** Yes, proper hydration is crucial to good health. But if you drink too much late in the day, your bladder may give you a wake-up call. Be sure to empty your bladder just before bed too!
- **Don't eat heavy meals before bed,** as it can hinder your sleep quality. Aim to be done with dinner at least 2 hours before bedtime.

## H2: Tip #5: Keep a Consistent Sleep Schedule

Modern life makes it tough to get to bed on time. With Netflix, Google, and your phone available 24/7, it can be tempting to stay up late.

However, keeping a consistent sleep schedule is *key* to improving your sleep.

Your body's circadian rhythm syncs with the rising and setting of the sun. Having irregular sleep and wake times confuses your internal clock.

It's recommended that adults aim for at least 7 hours of sleep. (8) Pick a sleep and wake time that works for you and *stick with it!*

Weekends are often when sleep schedules are cast aside. But do your best to keep your weekend and weekday sleep and wake times within one hour of each other. The more consistent you are, the better your circadian rhythm will serve you.

## H2: Tip #6: Step Away from the Screens

A recent survey found that the average American spends nearly 4 hours staring at their phone and over three hours watching TV every day. (9)

That's a whole lot of screens! And while electronic devices can be entertaining, they can throw off your sleep.

Smartphones, laptops, tablets, televisions, and other electronic devices emit *a ton* of blue light. Blue light exposure in the evening confuses your circadian rhythm and impairs your melatonin production.

Luckily, there are several things you can do to prevent this:

- Declare the hour before bed sacred screen-free time. If you can swing two hours, even better. Use that time to wind down instead. (See tip #7)
- Install a blue light filter app on your phone. They're available for Android and iPhone
- Download a blue light blocker app like [flux](#) to your laptop or computer.
- If you do indulge in screentime before bed, wear some [blue-light-blocking glasses](#).

## H2: Tip #7: Have a Winding Down Routine

Wondering what to do with all this evening time without screens? Create a winding-down routine!

Why? Indulging in some relaxing self-care before bed quiets your mind, helping you slide into sleep more easily.

Below are a few suggestions that promote relaxation. Play around with them until you discover the perfect winding down routine for you:

- Practice some gentle stretches.
- Read a book.
- Do a few restorative yoga poses. ([Here's a few](#) ideal for bedtime)
- Journal.
- Listen to some calming music.
- Meditate.
- Take a hot bath. Want a relaxing boost? Add [Epsom salts](#) for more sleep power.

## **H2: Tip #8: Take a Sleep Support Supplement**

If you've tried all the tips above and are still struggling with shut-eye, consider some sleep support. Here are two all-natural options for giving your sleep a boost:

### **H3: Magnesium – aka “Nature’s Chill Pill”**

Magnesium is a mineral involved in over 300 important enzymatic reactions in your body! (10) It affects your hormones, muscles, bones, mood, and yes...sleep.

Chronic stress, soil degradation, and poor food quality make it tough to get your fill of magnesium. In fact, 48% of Americans don't get enough. (11)

Busy mind keeping you from getting a good night's sleep? Magnesium may help. It increases melatonin and stimulates GABA, an inhibitory neurotransmitter that slows down your brain. It's the same neurotransmitter that popular sleep drugs like Ambien work on. (12) Only with magnesium you can avoid the nasty side effects.

**How to try it:** The RDA for magnesium is 300 mg a day. It's best to take magnesium about an hour before bed. Some forms of magnesium can cause loose stools if you take too much. Start small and work your way up until you find a good fit for you.

### **H3: Melatonin – The Sleepy-time Hormone**

Melatonin -- the hormone that tells your body when it's time to sleep, is produced naturally in your pineal gland. However, as we've gone over, modern life can disrupt our melatonin levels. That's when supplementation can help.

Research shows melatonin supplementation reduces the time needed to fall asleep and allows you to sleep longer. (13) It can be especially helpful for situations where your circadian rhythm is thrown off – like traveling or working night shifts.

**How to try it:** The best time to take melatonin is half an hour before bed. An effective dosage will range between 0.5-3.0 mg. Start with 0.5 mg and slowly work your way up until you find the right dose for you. If you go overboard and take too much, you may experience daytime sleepiness.

## **H2: Takeaways**

No more wondering, “How can I improve my sleep?” Armed with the eight tips above, you have the tools to transform your sleep from wretched to restful. Which of the good sleep habits are you itching to implement first?

1. Sunshine is your friend. Visit her often (especially in the morning).

2. Work up a sweat often, but not at night.
3. Your sleep cave should be dark, cool, and quiet.
4. Be choosy when it comes to what you eat and drink (and when).
5. Your body craves consistency. Stick to your sleep schedule.
6. Limit your screen time at night.
7. Develop a pre-bedtime ritual to ease into sleep.
8. Get support if needed. Magnesium or melatonin may help.

Next to eating a healthy diet and regular exercise, getting a good night's sleep *is the best thing* you can do to upgrade your health. Pick a few tips that resonated above, stick with them, and don't be surprised if you start waking up with a pep in your step.

## References:

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