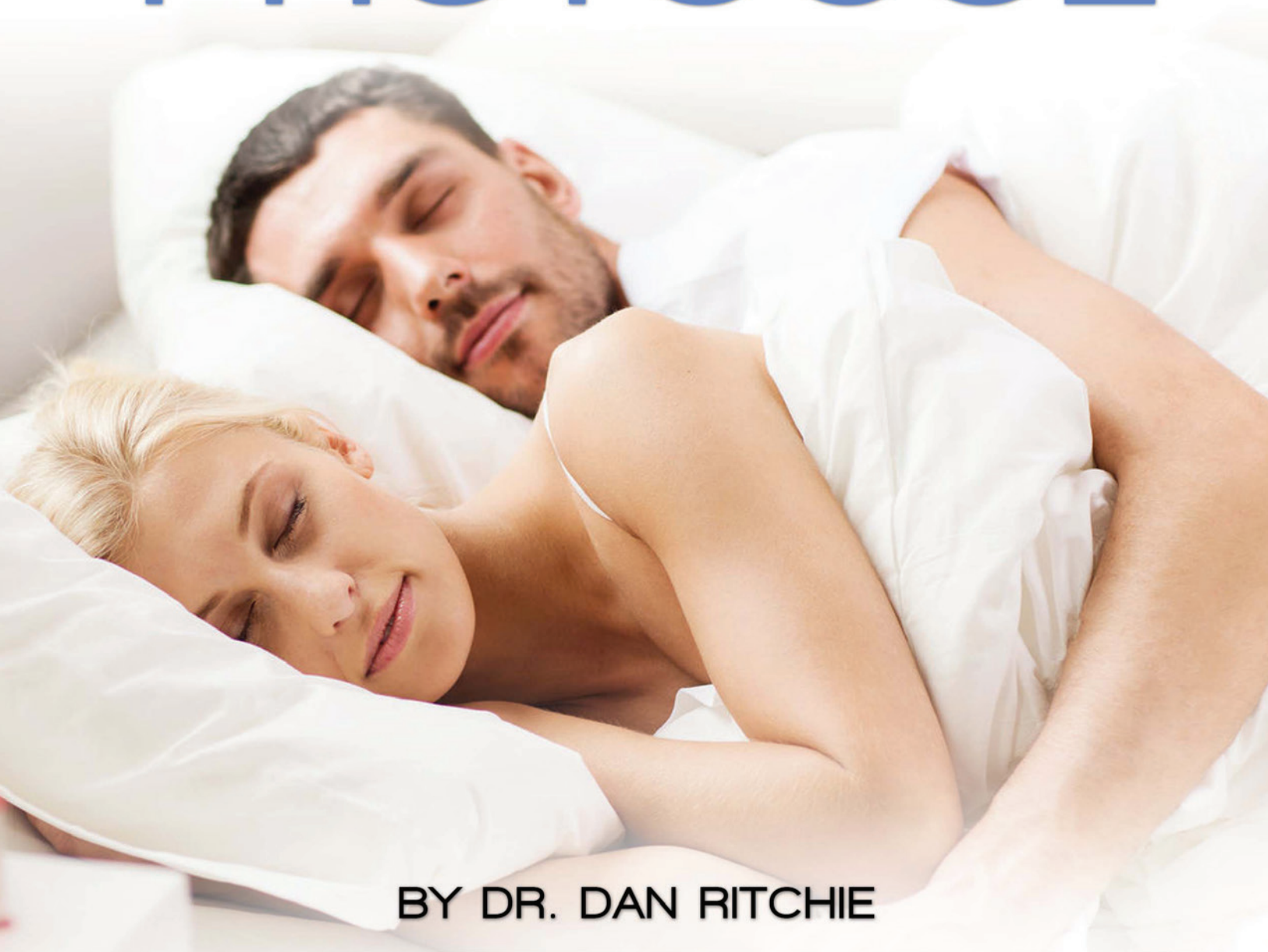


The Simple SLEEP PROTOCOL



BY DR. DAN RITCHIE

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The exercise and nutritional programs in this book are intended to supplement, not replace, any exercise or dietary regimen prescribed by your health care professional. As with all exercise and dietary programs, you should get your doctor's approval before beginning.

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Sleep Protocol Chapter 1: History of Sleep

Did you know in some parts of the world, certain cultures don't have a word for the term insomnia? Research conducted in three preindustrial societies in Bolivia and Southern Africa has suggested that our hunter-gather ancestors slept better than us despite only sleeping an average of 6.4 hours a night.

Despite the geographic and cultural differences between the three groups studied, they all showed similar trends in sleeping. These trends suggest that our ancestors slept three hours after sunset and would wake up before sunrise. However, despite our advances in sleep technology and drugs, 80% of us in the United States still suffer from sleeping disorders. Sleep has only become a problem in the past 100 years where more and more people are experiencing sleepless nights and accumulative fatigue. What has caused such a drift in the quality of our sleep where billions of dollars is spent annually on drugs to help us get a good night's rest?



In 1729, Jean-Jacques d'Ortous de Mairan identified biological rhythms when studying the daily opening and closing of the leaves of a heliotrope plant. The French geophysicist guessed that the plant responded to the presence of sunlight and tested this theory by placing the heliotrope plant in a dark room to watch its

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response to the lack of sunlight. Jean-Jacques d'Ortous de Mairan found that despite the absence of sunlight the plant's daily rhythmic movements of the heliotrope's leaves persisted. de Mairan had discovered circadian rhythms in plants and had suggested that an internal clock controlled these biological rhythms.

This discovering stimulated interest in the human biological rhythm where greater research was done in order to understand sleeping patterns. de Mairan's theory of daily rhythmic movements was applied to the human body where the human biological clock was thought of. The circadian rhythm was found to be responsible for the regulation of sleepiness and wakefulness. This internal clock is designed to regulate the sleep-wake cycle over a 24 hour period. Levels of wakefulness differ throughout the day where sleepiness is most prevalent during 1:00pm-3:00pm and 2:00am-4:00am. However, this can differ among us as some of us may be considered morning people while others may feel they function better in the evenings.

Those of us who are able to function more effectively in the morning are called 'larks' whereas, those who work better in the evenings are called 'owls'. However this can change throughout our lifetime. For example teenagers are prone to sleeping and waking late and therefore are considered 'owls', however once you are older and your routine changes; you may find that you prefer to sleep and wake earlier. Once you listen to your body's internal clock and follow your natural cues of when to sleep and wake your natural circadian rhythm will become balanced allowing you the quality of sleep our ancestors experienced those many years ago.

So all our ancestors did was to follow their natural clock, sounds easy right? However since industrialization we have somehow lost these natural sleep instincts as we have bombarded our bodies with artificial stimulation from cell phones, televisions, computers, laptops etc. tricking our bodies in believing it's always day time. We are a world that is addicted to constant stimulation and it's these sources of stimulation that keeps us up at night. Twenty stressors are

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identified in this book however I go into more depth in the three most common you will experience.

Once these stress signals are identified and removed in your life and you follow the simple sleep protocol laid out for you at the end of this book, your sleep troubles will become a thing of the past. Plus, you'll get an ancient sleep trick used by Native Americans that will ease your mind and calm your body. This will allow you to peacefully drift away into a deep sleep as soon as your head hits the pillow. 3am stares at the ceiling will become a thing of your past by eliminating the long stressful nights you once experienced.

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Chapter 2: Sleeping Medication

There are many drugs on the market today that are used for the treatment of sleeping disorders such as insomnia. Despite the effectiveness of these drugs studies are now showing the long term consequences and side effects associated with the use of these wonder drugs. Those of us who battle with insomnia may find a sense of relief when taking sleeping tablets, however long term use of these drugs comes with multiple risks.

Prescription sleeping aids may seem to be the perfect remedy for a sleepless night. You take a pill and within minutes you feel the sleepiness you have longed for all day and the perfect night of sleep awaits you. Although there is a time and place for the use of this medication, it is important to acknowledge and understand the risks associated with the long term use them. A doctor of internal medicine; Marc Leavey, MD says that prescription sleeping aids are fairly safe to use and well-tolerated, however when used improperly can cause multiple problems.

Six issues related to the long term use and risks associated with prescription medication are discussed below. These include tolerance build-up, drowsy driving, erratic behavior, falling down, risk of cancer and addiction.

Risk #1: Tolerance Build-Up

Your body grows accustomed to drugs when you use them for long periods of time. This results in you having to take higher and higher doses of the medication to get the same effect. However, if you take high doses of sleeping medication this could lead to depressed breathing while sleeping which can cause death. To



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reduce the risk of drug tolerances do not take sleeping medication for longer than a week or two at most.

If you have a short-term sleeping disorder and you need to re-establish your normal sleeping patterns over a short period time these drugs will be effective and relatively safe. However the risks associated with taking sleeping pills only increases when the drug is taken longer than 7 to 10 days at a time.

Risk #2: Drowsy Driving

Recent studies have shown that people who take certain sleeping tablets such as Zolpidem (Ambien) may still have enough drugs in their systems in the morning to impair driving. Due to this finding the U.S Food and Drug Administration lowered the recommended dose of these drugs to lower the quantity of the drug still present in your system in the morning.

By following your doctor's dosing instructions you can avoid next-day drowsiness. Only take sleeping tablets like Ambien if you have at least 7 hours that you can devote to sleep. There is nothing worse than waking up tired in the morning so be vigilant when prescribing to this medication.

Risk #3: Erratic Behavior

We have all heard the funny stories from friends and family about the weird things we do while we are asleep. However prescription sleeping pills especially benzodiazepines have been known to cause side effects such as amnesia and sleepwalking. When on sleeping tablets many people may find themselves waking up and not knowing where they are or how they got there.

This may seem funny at first however this can become very dangerous. If you notice this type of behavior in yourself or other significant others when on sleeping medication it is important that you report these behaviors to your doctor promptly so you can be prescribed an alternate dose or drug to help you get the

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peaceful night sleep you desire.

Risk #4: Falling Down

Research done in hospitals found that patients that took sleeping tablets such as Zolpidem were four times more likely to fall compared to those who were not on the drug.

This may not seem as a big problem at first but falling is absolutely a problem. We have sensors in our bodies such as the proprioceptors in our ankles, that tell our brains where we are in space. If sleeping medication is affecting the sensors that constantly measure where your center of gravity is you will fall down. Older people are at a greater risk of this and can be very dangerous to their safety.

Risk #5: Cancer and Death

According to a study conducted in 2012, people who take sleeping tablets are more likely to get cancer. More research is required to establish the effect of certain dosages and drugs on the body before significant link can be established. The authors of the study suggest that alternate treatments to sleeping disorders such as cognitive behavioral therapy that changes your patterns of thinking, could be a better alternate to sleeping drugs.

Risk #6: Addiction

Once you start using sleeping tablet especially over long periods of time it is difficult to wean yourself off the drug. “Rebound insomnia” can occur when you stop taking sleeping aids after using them over long periods. Your sleeping issues become worse than before and greater dosages of the drug are required to get you to sleep. If you are looking at going off this medication it is important that you speak to your doctor about setting up a gradual reduction in dosage rather than just going off the drug completely. It will be a difficult transition to make but with a gradual reduction of the drug in your system you will have a better chance of not becoming reliant on the drug completely.

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Chapter 3: The Benefits of Sleep



We all know that sleep makes us feel better, boosts our mood and eliminates the dark rings under our eyes, however research is showing further benefits in a good night's sleep. By getting adequate sleep we ensure healthy living that can benefit your weight, mind, heart and many more. Eleven benefits have been identified in this book and are discussed in the following paragraphs. These benefits include improved memory, decreased inflammation, longevity, improved creativity, increased cognitive and athletic performance to name a few.

Benefit #1: Improved Memory

While we are sleeping our minds are still surprisingly busy sorting out and strengthening the memories and skills we have experienced during the day. This process is called consolidation and allows us to retain memories and strengthen skills we have practiced while being awake. When we are trying to learn something new may it be mental or physical, there is only so much we can practice.

The retention of these skills becomes cemented into our minds during our sleep and allows us to perform that certain skill better the next day. Similarly with memories, our brain sorts and stores our memories into short and long – term memory. This allows easy access to memories in our daily routines. Memories of our childhood are stored in our long term memory whereas remembering to hang up the washing is stored in our short-term memory. Studies have shown that

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sleep increases our retention of memories and suggests that if we are learning a new skill we will perform better at it once we have had a good night's sleep.

Benefit #2: Longevity

Sleeping too little or too much has found to be associated with a decreased lifespan. In a study conducted in 2010 it was found that women aged between 50 and 79 years of age who sleep less than five hours a night had a greater risk for premature death compared to those who slept more. More and more research is highlighting the health benefits associated with adequate sleep and in turn provides longevity. More effort is needed in looking after our bodies and one thing we can do to make sure we are giving our bodies the best chance yet, is to make sure we are sleeping more than five hours a night.

Benefit #3: Decreased Inflammation

Stroke, heart disease, arthritis, diabetes and premature aging are all linked to inflammation. With research showing that people who sleep fewer than six hours a night have higher levels of inflammatory proteins in their blood compared to people who get more sleep at night. A 2010 study showed that the C-reactive protein that is associated with heart attack risk was greater in individuals who slept less than five hours a day compared to people who sleep more than six hours a night. Improvements in inflammation and blood pressure have been shown in individuals with sleep apnea and insomnia once they have been provided with treatment of the sleep disorder.

Benefit #4: Increased Creativity

In addition to making memories and skills stronger, the brain appears to reorganize and restructure the memories and skills acquired during the day. This restructuring and reorganization of memories is suggested to improve not only your short and long term memory but also improves your creativity. Research conducted at Harvard University and Boston College suggested that emotional components of a memory are strengthened during sleep, which may in turn spur

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the creative process. Therefore if you want to take on a creative project such as painting or writing make sure you have had adequate sleep the night before to get your creative processes flowing.

Benefit #5: Improved Athletic Performance

Whether you are a competitive athlete or just a weekend warrior, sleep has been found to improve physical performance. A study conducted at Stanford University found that an average of ten hours sleep per night over seven to eight weeks showed improved average sprint times in college football players. Further findings suggested that day time fatigue and increased stamina was associated with increased sleep. Therefore if you have a sporting competition or fun run coming up make sure you get adequate sleep not just the night before but also the weeks that lead up to the event to ensure you can perform to your best ability on the day.

Benefit #6: Improved Grades

According to a study conducted in 2010, children between ten and sixteen years of ages who suffer from sleep disordered breathing such as sleep apnea, snoring and other disruptive sleeping behaviors, are more prone to attention and learning difficulties. This could lead to significant functional impairment at school resulting in poor grades and social issues. Similar results were found when college students did not get enough sleep. This study found that students who did not receive adequate sleep performed poorly in their grades compared to students who did. However, if you have a deadline to meet and you are willing to limit your sleep to get the work done will not affect you in the long-term, however severe and reoccurring sleep deprivation will impair learning.

Benefit #7: Increased Attention

A lack of sleep in children has been found to result in ADHD-like symptoms. Children do not respond to sleep deprivation the same way adults do. Where us as adults may feel sleepy the next day, children tend to get hyperactive. In 2009 a study was conducted on children aged between seven and eight found

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that children who got less than eight hours sleep a night showed symptoms of hyperactivity, inattentiveness and impulsiveness. Therefore ensure your kids are getting the right amount of sleep per night. Prevent your children from using screens such as tablets, television, computers etc. at least two hours before bedtime. Ensuring your children are receiving adequate sleep will not only make your child's life easier but yours too.

Benefit #8: Healthy Weight

If you are considering a new lifestyle and eating plan to lose those unwanted pounds then you might want to consider moving your bedtime earlier. Research conducted at the University of Chicago found that individuals who dieted while receiving adequate sleep at night lost more fat compared to those who did not. Further findings reported that the individuals who did not get enough sleep also felt hungrier throughout the day compared to those who sleep adequately. Both sleep and metabolism are controlled by the same area of the brain. When we are sleepy certain hormones are released into our bloodstream. These same hormones are responsible for appetite; therefore receiving adequate sleep will help you lose those pounds you long to get rid of.

Benefit #9: Decreased Stress

Health stress and sleep go hand in hand and both can affect cardiovascular health. Sleep has shown to significantly decrease levels of stress in people. It is also suggested that cholesterol levels are affected by sleep which plays a significant role in heart disease. By improving your sleep you are able to manage your stress more effectively decreasing the chance for increased cholesterol levels and heart disease.

Benefit #10: Avoid Accidents

Reports from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that the greatest number of fatal single-car accidents were due to being tired on the road. This exceeded the amount of accidents caused by alcohol. Researchers

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have found that sleepiness affects reaction time and decision making. One night of insufficient sleep can be as detrimental to your ability to drive as having an alcoholic drink.

Benefit #11: Decreased Depression

Those of us who suffer from anxiety and depression, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Studies have shown that a good night's sleep can improve mood and decrease anxiety. Adequate sleep is vital for overall emotional stability and adequate sleep is needed daily to keep the blues away. Sleeping more over the weekend will not alleviate this problem as our emotional stability is dependent on the amount of daily sleep we get, not the overall amount we get weekly.

Benefit #12: Increased Sex Drive And Improved Relationship

A study found that men who suffered from general sleep apnea had decreased levels of testosterone in their blood. Therefore suggesting that men that do not get adequate sleep will have lowered sex drives Furthermore sleep deprivation has shown to decrease sex drive and increase "tense tiredness" among couples. This leads to decreased sexual activity and increased fighting among couples. Therefore to ensure a happy life and relationship with your significant other, ensure you are both getting adequate sleep for a healthy and active sex life that will only improve both your lives.

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Chapter 4: Step 1– Sleep Stressors

Leading neuroscientist Professor Russell Foster says that a lack of sleep is damaging to our health and that sleep deprivation may be as bad for our health as smoking. People who only sleep five hours a night should be shunned like smokers according to Prof Russell Foster. A lack of sleep has been found to damage a whole host of skills such as empathy, information processing, moods, impulsiveness, impaired thinking to name a few.



With studies suggesting that our ability to process information at 4am in the morning is similar to the amount of alcohol that would makes us legally drunk. Therefore to ensure you are getting the quantity and quality of sleep needed to maintain not only your health but to ensure your safety; a list of 20 sleep stressors has been identified to help you identify the things in your life that are preventing the good night sleep your body craves. This is the first step you must take in order to get a better night's sleep.

Stressor #1: Excited, Man-Made Light

Everything from your cell phone, TV and bedroom lighting can trick your body into staying awake. Why? Because fake light illuminating your bedroom. Man made light makes your body believe it's still daytime, which blunts the release of the hormone melatonin and increases the release of the hormone cortisol. Cortisol is a stress hormone responsible for preparing you for the fight or flight response. Learn to shut off your TV and stop checking your cell phone or tablet right before bed and you will have a better night's sleep. My recommendation is

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to stay away from screens for at least 20-30 minutes before you're ready to close your eyes.

Stressor #2: Doing Too Much Before Bed

According to a U.S. National Sleep Foundation poll; during the hour before bed around 60% of us do household chores, 37% take care of children, 36% do activities with other family members, 36% are on the internet, and 21% do work related to their jobs. Working right up until bedtime doesn't give you a chance to wind down and prepare your body for sleep. Take the hour before bed to transition from the person-who-can-do-everything into the person-who-can-sleep. Read a book; take a bath—whatever will make you feel most relaxed.

Stressor #3: The Wrong Bedroom Temperature

Many people like to create a cocoon-like environment for sleep but while it might feel nice to be warm and cozy at night, a room that is too warm (or cold, for that matter) can cause multiple awakenings at night, leading to more disrupted and less refreshing sleep. The ideal sleeping temperature range is between 55 and 74 degrees Fahrenheit; most people find that the upper 60s is ideal. If you have a radiator that's hard to control, consider opening your window before you go to sleep—even in the winter—and leave it slightly open throughout the night.

Stressor #4: Timing

Studies have shown that human beings need between 7.5 and 9 hours uninterrupted sleep every night. This means that even if you get 7.5 hours of sleep, but you wake up during the night, you are not getting enough shuteye. And it is not just about the number of hours you sleep it is also about WHEN you sleep.

A study found that nurses who worked the night shift were at increased risk of gaining weight³ than those who slept between 10 pm and 8 am. Shift work causes a disruption in your normal pattern of sleep and can also increase your risk for cancer. Following your internal clock and sleep when you are most tired

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allows your circadian rhythm to balance providing you with not only satisfying sleep but also balances your hormones reducing your risk of cancers and other diseases.

Stressor #5: Waking To Use The Bathroom

The urge to wake up in the middle of the night to urinate is known as nocturia. Having to get out of bed is a pain in itself however research is showing that disrupted sleep is affecting the quality of sleep we require. Whether you are pregnant or just have a weak bladder waking up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom is a norm for you. However waking up to use the bathroom can lead to sleep issues as it reduces the overall quantity of sleep you are experiencing.

Try limit the amount of liquid you consume, especially caffeine to two hours before bed. Place a glass of water by your bed so when you wake in the morning you can properly hydrate yourself before your day starts. Providing relief on your bladder throughout the night will provide you with uninterrupted sleep.

Stressor #6: Blood Sugar Imbalance

If you go to bed on a tummy full of carbohydrate snacks, even fruit your blood sugar levels will drop later in the night and will most likely wake you up. If your blood sugar spikes and then drops again while you are sleeping, your body will crave carbohydrates to provide your body with further energy.

If you are insulin resistant or diabetic this form of snacking will cause more serious sleep disruptors such as lack of oxygen to the brain. Stay away from your night time snacking on the couch by ensuring you eat enough food at dinner.

Stressor #7: Elevated Cortisol

Our cortisol levels are very sensitive to stress and when we are exposed to stress these levels can be thrown off track and never decrease during the night. At 10pm our cortisol levels should be at its lowest and remain low until it rises in the morning. However exposure to stress causes cortisol to remain high during the night.

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When this happens our insulin become less effective and leads to elevated blood sugar levels and increased gain in body fat. Bonus #2 provides you with relaxation techniques that will help you destress before bedtime.

Stressor #8: Overweight

Being overweight comes with multiple health issues that affect your daily living; well it can also affect your bedtime too. Sleep apnea occurs when breathing is blocked during sleep causing oxygen levels to drop.

This condition is seen in individuals who are carrying an unhealthy amount of excess fat. Both sleep apnea and weight gain can elevate inflammation and the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. Try getting active and taking daily walks to help with weight loss. Don't try any fad diets as they won't be affective in the long-term. Weight-loss comes from a change in lifestyle so get involved in physical activities that you enjoy such as walking, swimming, cycling or even dancing.

Stressor #9: Inflammation And Pain

As mentioned earlier obesity causes inflammation and stress to our bodies. Inflammation can spread throughout our bodies causing pain in our joints, back or nerves. This pain can be disruptive to sleep causing you to wake up numerous times in the evenings. Getting active will increase cardiovascular flow which in turn increases oxygen supply to our cells. Participating in physical activities that you enjoy will not only benefit you from a weight-loss point of view but will also decrease inflammation and keep your points healthy and happy.

Stressor #10: Gluten And Other Food Sensitivities

Research has shown that there is an interconnected relationship between our stomach and brain. People who are sensitive to multiple food groups and suffer from leaky gut tend to have disrupted sleep. Studies have shown that once gluten-free diets are adapted and individuals eliminate certain sensitive foods

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from their diet, report that they have improved sleep. By recording the food you eat and quality of sleep over time will help you identify the foods that you are most sensitive to. Once you have identified the sensitive foods try eliminate them from your diet to ensure a peaceful night's sleep.

Stressor #11: Imbalanced neurotransmitters

Messages are sent through our nervous system in our bodies to determine our mood and level of wakefulness. These messages are sent via neurotransmitters in the body such as serotonin, dopamine, GABA, and glutamate. All these neurotransmitters can affect our sleep when their levels are out of balance.

Serotonin and GABA are calming neurotransmitters and when they are too low they can disturb sound sleep. Dopamine, glutamate and adrenaline are all stimulating hormones and if too high can cause difficulty in sleeping. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will allow these neurotransmitters to fire at the correct time and intensity ensuring a night of uninterrupted sleep.

Stressor #12: Hormonal changes

Estrogen and progesterone are hormones that are produced from the ovaries. During pregnancy, perimenopause and post-menopause the level of these two hormones change. However we require the right balance between estrogen and progesterone to ensure sleep is uninterrupted. In addition to this, night sweats associated with hormone changes can also cause us to wake up in the middle of the night.

Hormone replacement therapies are available when going through menopause. Speaking to your doctor about the changes occurring in your body will help you get on the right course of medication to manage the hormonal changes.

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Stressor #13: Not Enough Sunlight

Melatonin is the hormone responsible for the regulation of our internal clock also known as our circadian rhythm. This hormone increases at night at about 10pm and is associated with the restoration and repair of our bodies while sleeping. When melatonin levels decrease our sleep can be disrupted.

Levels of melatonin increase when exposed to direct sunlight. If you work in a building that provides little natural light get out of the office as much as you can during the day for five minute breaks to get some extra rays on your skin. Just make sure you wear SPF on hotter days as sunburn will definitely affect your bedtime.

Stressor #14: Stress

Stress can be very damaging to our health. When work demands or other situations cause us to stress we are more likely to have a restless night. Obsessive thinking can take over our lives and not only affect our personal lives but our overall well-being. More and more research is showing the deadly effects stress has on our bodies. This is true for both adults and children. Research has been shown stress to lead to elevated cortisol (stressor #7) and weight gain (stressor #8), which further disrupts our sleep. Bonus #2 provides you with relaxation techniques that will help you destress before bedtime.

Stressor #15: Caffeine

There is no denying that most of us are reliant on caffeine to function. Although very effective in increasing wakefulness in the morning; caffeine has been found to temporarily block the chemical called adenosine that tells the brain to go to sleep. Caffeine in essence prevents the brain from receiving the sleepy hormone therefore you are able to maintain your activity and stay alert. However consuming caffeine late in the day prevents your body from getting tired later in the evening therefore preventing you from having a good night sleep. Try avoid consuming coffee and other caffeinated beverages such as energy drinks after

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4pm. This will allow your brain to receive the sleepy hormone at the appropriate time allowing you to fall asleep easier.

Stressor #16: Alcohol

Alcohol is widely used as a sleep aid as it can help a person fall asleep a lot quicker, however research has shown that when you go to sleep after a nightcap your sleep is under the influence of alcohol and will be compromised. Drinking one or two alcoholic beverages before bedtime has shown to cause more nighttime awakenings and in some cases insomnia. When metabolized; alcohol has an arousal effect on you that usually occurs later in the night.

This arousal effect wakes you up from your slumber and makes it difficult to fall back asleep. Avoid alcoholic beverages at least two hours before bedtime and if you are drinking make sure you drink water in-between drinks to avoid dehydration and further alcohol-related sleep disruptors such as headaches and thirstiness.

Stressor #17: Noise

Some of us may enjoy falling asleep to the sound of the radio or television at night, however studies have shown that the level of volume needs to be very low. If you rely on external noises to help you fall asleep try avoid the television as the volume can change throughout the night when new shows come on and light emitted from the screen can disrupt your sleep too. Rather have a radio playing in the background so you can ensure the sound levels don't change and you don't have the negative effects associated with television screens.

Stressor #18: Bedmate

Cuddling your significant while you fall asleep may sound peaceful and snug, however research is showing that a bedmate may have a significant effect on the quality of sleep you have. When your partner's sleep and wake times are different from yours, or if they snore or suffer from a sleep disorder you will most likely suffer from sleep disruptions. This may also be relevant to having pets in

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your bed too. Even though they may be sweet to cuddle during the night they may have detrimental effects on your sleep and overall health and well-being. Try avoid having pets in your bed, as it is you need to deal with your bedmate disruptors you need additional disruption while you get your well needed sleep.

Stressor #19: Medication

Many prescription drugs on the markets that are used to treat and control common disease may have detrimental effects on the quality of sleep you are having. Beta blockers that are used to treat migraines, glaucoma, high blood pressure and congestive heart failure; can limit the amount of REM sleep. Other drugs such as antidepressants have also been found to promote insomnia in some people. If you are taking prescription drugs look at the side effects associated with taking them. If your medication is preventing your from having sound sleep consult your doctor so you may change the medication you are currently taking.

Stressor #20: Smoking

Many smokers will tell you that after taking that drag of cigarette they feel relaxed and less stressed. Seemingly this should help people fall asleep however this is quite the opposite. Nicotine is the addictive substance found in cigarettes that keeps people hooked on smoking. This drug is similar to caffeine as they are both stimulates that prevent your brain from receiving the sleepy hormone known as adenosine. Studies have shown that for every cigarette smoked the person loses 1.2 minutes of sleep. Furthermore it is suggested that smokers who light up two hours before bed are more prone to waking up feeling agitated and restless as nicotine withdrawals set in in the morning.

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Chapter 5: How To Prime Your Body For Sleep

This chapter looks at handy tricks you can do on a daily basis to help prime your body for sleep. By following my simple instructions below you will be well prepared for one of the best night's sleep you can have. These sleepy time tricks will help you achieve an effortless rest like you were 10 years old again. As we know now there are multiple benefits associated with adequate sleep and these benefits outweigh the risks associated with sleep deprivation. Therefore every effort should be taken in ensuring your body is primed for a good night of uninterrupted sleep.

Sleepy Time Trick #1: "Deep Sleep" 1-2 Punch

ZMA is a natural supplement used to induce sleep by relaxing your muscles and allowing you a full night's sleep. ZMA stands for Zinc Monomethionine Aspartate and also contains magnesium aspartate and vitamin B6. Research conducted on ZMA has found that it is effective in encouraging muscle relaxation which leads to sleepiness. The valuable benefits of ZMA include better sleep quality, faster recovery, increased strength and endurance, higher testosterone and libido. This sleep-inducing supplement is recommended to be taken 30-60 minutes before bedtime.



Sleepy Time Trick #2: Delicious Bedtime Smoothie

Mother Nature has provided us with food that can help aid a good night's sleep. These foods can be blended together for a delicious bedtime smoothie you can drink before you hit the pillow to ensure you fall asleep soundly. These

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foods contain natural substances that help promote a natural sedative. These ingredients include:

- **Warm Milk:** The calcium found in milk helps you relax while the tryptophan present in the milk helps you fall asleep.
- **Banana:** Bananas contain melatonin and serotonin which help you sleep better as well as magnesium that acts as a muscle relaxant.
- **Cherries:** Cherries contain melatonin which helps regulate your sleep.
- **Nutmeg:** Similar to cherries acts as a natural relaxant to help induce sleep.
- **Honey:** Honey aids in the release of melatonin and has been used for years as a natural sleep aid.
- **Flax seeds:** These seeds contain high levels of tryptophan and omega-3 fatty acids. When consumed increases levels of serotonin.
- **Almonds:** Almonds are a great source of magnesium that aids in sleep promotion and muscle relaxation.
- **Cacao:** Contains magnesium however high quantities of cacao can make you more alert so be cautious when consuming.

Sweet Dreams Smoothie Recipe

The Ingredients

- 1/2 cup warm milk
- 1/2 fresh medium banana
- 1/2 cup pitted cherries
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon honey
- The Add-ons
- 1 tablespoon flax seeds
- 1/4 cup almonds
- 1/2 tablespoon cacao powder



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*Place the ingredients into your high speed blender and blend for around 30-45 seconds.

Sleepy Time Trick #3: Perfect Room Temperature

Temperature plays an important role in getting a decent night's rest, a bedroom that is either too hot or too cold may lead to you waking up multiple times throughout the night. Sleeping in these conditions is extremely disruptive and you will feel less refreshed when waking. I recommended that your room temperature be regulated between 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit, making the process of falling asleep simpler. If you have a radiator that is difficult to control it is recommended that you leave a window slightly open to ensure adequate air flow and prevent your room from getting too warm instead of using a heater or radiator.

Sleepy Time Trick #4: Bedtime Cocktail

A bedtime cocktail consisting of L-theanine and 5-HTP has been shown to be effective in inducing relaxation and deep sleep during the night. L-theanine is an amino acid (AA) naturally found in green tea. This amino acid has been found to reduce levels of cortisol and epinephrine reducing the level of stress experienced.

Higher dosages can be taken at night to assist with sleep whereas smaller dosages are taken during the day to reduce stress and increase mental focus. 100-400 mg is recommended to be taken before bed to allow for a peaceful night's sleep. 5-HTP is also an amino acid, however this AA is primarily used by the body as a building block for melatonin and serotonin. 5-HTP has been found to be highly effective in inducing sleepiness and restoring sleep.

This amino acid has also been found to reduce migraine, headaches, hot flashes, emotional overeating and panic attacks. 25-100 mg needs to be taken before bedtime to improve sleep. When combining these two amino acids, you will be guaranteed with a powerful bedtime cocktail that will slip you into a deep restful sleep.

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Sleepy Time Trick #5: Pre-Bed Routine

1. **Do not have caffeine four to six hours before your bedtime.**

Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, non-herbal teas, diet drugs and some pain reliever drugs. Caffeine prevents your brain from receiving the sleepy hormone (adenosine), so by removing it 4-6 hours before bedtime you are allowing the sleepy hormones to be received by your brain so you may have a peaceful night's sleep. You should also limit your alcoholic drinks to one or two drinks 1-2 hours before bedtime. Alcohol will help you fall asleep however it could possible wake you up during the night.

2. **Shut down all electronics and distractions several hours before bed.**

Make sure all your electronics are switched off before you go to bed at night. These electronics emit light from their screens throughout the night if left on. This light can stimulate your brain, reducing your brain's ability to produce the sleepy hormone melatonin and disturbs your circadian rhythm.

3. **Do a relaxing activity.**

By participating in a relaxing activity before bed will help calm you down before going to sleep. Relaxing activities send signals to your brain to let it know that it is time to shut down and go to sleep. If you find you are tossing and turning during the night, get out of bed and try a relaxing activity such as reading or listening to music. This can help prime your body for sleep again. Bonus #2 provides you with multiple relaxing techniques you can adapt to your sleeping regime.

4. **Make your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.**

The environment in which you sleep has a great influence on the quality of sleep you get. It can be difficult to fall asleep when you your bedroom is bright, chaotic and loud. By blocking out outside light by using heavy dark blinds or curtains you are able to provide a calming environment for your brain to shut down for the day. If you battle with removing all light sources in your room an alternative option is to wear a comfortable sleep mask that will block all light entering your eyes. Cover all electronics that emit

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light throughout the night and ensure all noise sources such as televisions, radios etc. are switched all to allow for peace and quiet. If there are sources of noise that you cannot control then invest in some earplugs that will help block out the distracting noises.

5. Choose A Comfortable Sleep Position.

If you are a snorer and you are finding that you are waking yourself up or your bedmate during the night try elevating your head with pillows. By elevating your head you will be able to breathe more easily reducing the amount of snoring you will have to endure. There are specially designed pillow you can purchase now that helps you breath properly throughout the night. However if this is not in your budget try sleeping on your left or right side with your legs bent towards your chest as this position ensures your body is relaxed and will help improve your breathing. If you are pregnant and battling to get comfortable during the night try sleeping on your side with a body pillow for support.

Summary

By following these handy tricks and simple instructions you will be well on your way to a restful night's sleep. Routinely priming your body for sleep will allow you to naturally prepare for bed and overcome the anxiety that is often associated with falling asleep. Sleepy time tricks uses a combination of pre bed relaxation techniques, as well as various cocktail's to achieve this. As we are all different and experience diverse sleep problems, it is suggested that through a process of experimentation, that you try a combination of these techniques and tailor it to what works best for you.

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Chapter 6: Relaxation Tricks That Hit The Sleep Button In Your Brain

Have you ever wished you could travel back in time and fall asleep effortlessly like you did when you were a child? Your parents would maybe read a story to help you drift away or rub your head until you peacefully closed your eyes and floated off to dreamland. Things were so much better and easier you think to yourself when you were younger. Or maybe you suffer on the flipside of the pillow.



You can fall asleep, but have problems staying asleep. You wake up in the middle of the night multiple times, tossing and turning, praying to just get back to bed while your mind begins to race like a thoroughbred racehorse busting out of the starting gates. Your anxiety kicks in and you yell to your brain to just stop! Yet it only gets worse. Thoughts start to ping pong back and forth in your head. You begin to worry about the next day's events, stuff at work, the kids, your family and what needs to be done. You anticipate not falling back to sleep and what it's going to be like to go through another day of barely any shuteye.

It's a horrible, helpless feeling and something I can understand, but only you can fix. In the end, most of us need extra help in the beginning to kick start the process and get into a rhythm. Science has made amazing strides uncovering plenty of natural sleep aids that force your body to relax, calm your mind and reduce anxiety. The best part is these natural sleep aids have been around for thousands of years and used by the ancient people with great success.

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Relaxation Trick #1: A Centuries Old Technique

The first relaxation trick I propose you do to help fall asleep quicker is a century old technique used to relax each muscle group in your body. This technique makes you aware of your body in space and helps you identify the areas in your body where you hold most of your tension. By realizing the difference between muscle tension and relaxation you will be better equipped at relaxing your muscles.

The Muscular Relaxation Technique involves you contracting and relaxing each muscle group in your body from the tip of your toes to the top of your head. This technique has been used successfully in the treatment for insomnia, stress and anxiety control, as well as reduces symptoms of certain types of chronic pain. This technique was described by Edmund Jacobson in the 1915 and is based on the concept that mental calmness is a natural response to muscle relaxation. Anyone can learn this technique and the more you practice the better you will be at relaxing on the spot. It only requires 10 minutes of your time a day to practice and should be done so in a supine position (lying down).

Most practitioners recommend that you start from your lower extremities and work your way up to the top of your head, however either direction will work. Spend at least 5 seconds on each muscle group, contract the muscle and then relax it. Once you are satisfied that you have contracted and relaxed the muscle group move onto the next one.

How it works:

1. While inhaling contract one muscle group for 5-10 seconds, then exhale releasing all the tension in that muscle.
2. Give yourself 10-20 seconds rest between muscle groups to help you relax.
3. When you release the tension in each muscle group imagine the tension disappearing from your body and focus on the changes you feel when that muscle group is relaxed.

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4. Gradually work your way up your body ensuring you have contracted and relaxed every muscle group in your body.
 - **Face.** Lift your eyebrows to wrinkle your forehead, and then slowly relax and let the tension out of your forehead. Close your eyes tightly and then relax and slowly open them. Tense your lips, cheeks, and jaw muscles by grimacing, and then feel a sense of serenity come over your face as you relax all your facial muscles at once.
 - **Shoulders and arms.** Bring your shoulders toward your ears, tensing your muscles, and then slowly let them relax. Starting with your upper arms, flex your biceps, and then relax, letting the tension out of your muscles. Tense your forearms, and then slowly let them relax.
 - **Chest and abdomen.** Take a deep breath and tense the muscles within your chest and abdomen, and then slowly exhale as you relax these muscles.
 - **Back.** Flex the muscles in your back as you arch them on the floor or bed, and then relax and let the stress and tension go out of your back muscles.
 - **Hips and buttocks.** Tighten the muscles in your hips and buttocks, and then slowly release the tension and feel the stress leaving this area of your body.
 - **Legs and feet.** Flex your leg muscles, squeezing your legs together, and then slowly relax. Flex your feet for a few seconds, and then relax them. Curl your toes, and then slowly let them return to neutral.

Relaxation Trick #2: Visualization

When you find yourself battling to fall asleep after waking up during the night I have a simple visualization trick that will help you fall back to sleep effortlessly. All you have to do is follow the simple instructions below to help you fall back into a deep and peaceful sleep.

1. Imagine a large blackboard as big as yourself. You have chalk and a blackboard eraser.

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2. By using your imagination chalk the number 100 on the blackboard as big as you can.
3. Once you have drawn the number on your imaginary blackboard imagine wiping away the number with the eraser.
4. Do this as slowly as you can making sure you remove all the chalk off the blackboard.
5. Once you have completed this move onto the next descending number 99.
6. Continue this task until you reach zero.

The more you practice this technique the better you will become at falling back to sleep. You will be so good at it that by the time you get to 97 you will be fast asleep.

Relaxation Trick #3: Pre-Bed Ritual

My pre-bed ritual to guarantee your mind remains blank and quiet once your head hits the pillow and your eyes close. Follow the simple steps to an early night sleep.

1. Breathe in for a count of 1
2. Visualize the number 1
3. Breathe out the number 1
4. Repeat steps until you hit 10.

When thoughts creep into your mind, acknowledge them but let them go in your next exhalation.

Relaxation Trick #4: No More Midnight Ceiling Staring

When you find yourself awake in the middle of the night staring at the ceiling, get out of bed and walk around. Lying in bed staring at the ceiling will only draw you into obsessive thinking and will prolong your sleepiness. By doing this frequently you are training your body to stay awake in bed while you become frustrated about

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the lack of sleep you are getting. So get out of the covers and take a short break from trying to fall asleep and remove yourself from your bedroom. Do something that help relaxes you during this time such as listening to music or reading a book.

Once you get back into bed follow the three simple steps you will find below.

1. Identify and remove the stress signals in your life that keep your mind awake and your body stimulated.
2. Follow simple cues that prime your brain and system for maximum snooze.
3. Deepen your relaxation state to guarantee you have the best quality sleep.

Get these steps in the right order and only then will you begin falling asleep like you did so many years ago as a child. That's why if you ever tried any sleep "tricks" before and failed, it's because you neglected this sequence. This exact protocol fixes your biological kink and restores your body's primal instincts for automatic sleep. Just trying ONE tactic like popping a pill or listening to some soothing music will not work long term. But that's not your fault. How were you supposed to know what to, until now? All you have to do is follow these simple steps, and those nights of tossing and turning will become a thing of the past.

Relaxation Trick #5: My 10-Step Simple-To-Do Meditation

It is widely accepted that mediation is an effective method used in relaxation. More often than not the battle of falling asleep originates from the stress we are experiencing and holding onto. There are some meditative exercises that can be done to assist in better sleep. Below is a 10-step mindfulness practice to help improve sleep.

This exercise is not to make you fall asleep instead it aids in increasing your awareness and understanding of your thoughts at night. However these exercises could result in sleep for beginners.

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Step 1

While lying in bed at night concentrate on taking five deep slow breathes with air entering through your nose and exiting through your mouth. While breathing imagine the stressors of your life exit your body with every breath. This melts feelings of tension and stress in your body. This will place you in an ideal state of mind for this exercise to be effective.

Step 2

Now that you are in a relaxed position; check –in and ask yourself how you are feeling both physically and psychological? When outside thoughts enter your mind do not ignore them; instead acknowledge them but let them go with your next exhalation. Like relaxation, sleepiness takes time to generate.

Step 3

Once you have acknowledged your thoughts and let them go start becoming aware of your physical surrounding. Bring your attention to the feeling off the bed touching your body; scanning the areas of your body that exert the most pressure on the mattress to check whether your weight is distributed evenly on the bed. At this point you can also notice any sounds in the background. When falling asleep it is important to remove any noises that may disrupt your sleep. If there are sounds that you have no control over such as traffic, people, machinery etc. instead of resisting the sound either drown the noise with calming music or wear ear plugs. Alternatively remain present with the sound for at least 30 seconds before bringing your attention back to your body.

Step 4

To get a sense of how your body actually feels in the moment, conduct an accurate scan of your body from your head to your toes. During this time notice any tension or tightness in your body, while your attention is on that area; find peace in the fact that you are about to sleep and those areas of tension will be removed. You can scan your body several times throughout this mediation;

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acknowledging the stress but knowing it will be gone by the end of this exercise.

Step 5

You may have noticed by now the rising and falling sensation of your breath. If you have not then bring your attention to the place in your body where you may feel the movements of breathing more clearly. Just relax and let your body breathe naturally. There is no wrong or right way of doing this step, it doesn't matter if you are feeling this sensation in your chest or in your stomach. What is important is that you notice whether the breath is shallow or deep, short or long, irregular or smooth.

Step 6

When you find yourself obsessing over particular thoughts, bring your mind back to the sensation of your breathing allowing these thoughts to come and go as easily as your breath enters and leaves your lungs.

Step 7

Once you are happy with steps 1-6 and you find yourself in relaxed state, bring your mind to the day you have just experienced. Start by thinking about the very first moment you remember in the day, from the time you woke up in the morning. Do you remember how you were feeling at the time of waking up? Gently fast-forward from this point to now, watching and replaying all the events of the day. This does not need to be detailed; it is more of a quick overview of your day that should take about 3 minutes. As the memories of your day play in front you don't allow any further investigation into these thoughts. Just let the events of the day come and go.

Step 8

Now that you have brought yourself back to the present moment, allow your mind to focus back onto your body. First pay attention to your small toe on your left foot and imagine switching it off for the night. Allow yourself time to repeat the

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words “switch off” or “rest” in your mind as you concentrate on the toe. Provide permission to your muscles to relax and switch off for the night.

Step 9

Once you have achieved step 8 move onto the rest of toes, moving to the ball of your foot to the arch, heel, ankle, calf all the way to your hips. At this point take note of the difference in tension felt between your right and left leg. Once you are happy that your left side is relaxed move onto your right toes up to your hip.

Step 10

By enjoying the feeling of relaxation and complete submission to sleep you will now find yourself in an optimal state of mind for a good night's sleep. At this stage allow your thoughts to wander as much as you like, freely associating from one thought to another, until your drift off to sleep.

Relaxation Trick #6: Lavender Oils

The link between lavender and sleep has been established for centuries as folklore tells us that lavender use to be put in pillows to help aid sleep during the night. Scientific evidence shows that lavender has a calming effect on our bodies. Suggesting that lavender slows down the nervous system; promoting sleep, relaxation and improvement in mood among insomnia sufferers. Further research suggests that using lavender oils during massage will improve mood, relaxation and .decrease anxiety preparing your body for a good night's sleep.

You can use lavender oils in various ways to help you relax before bedtimes. As mentioned before you can use lavender oil in massage to help alleviate stress, well placing a few drops into a warm bath before bed will give you the same calming effect. Burning lavender oils in your bedroom before bedtime will also help promote the benefits of lavender oil use, however ensure the scent is not too overpowering that it causes you discomfort.

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Relaxation Trick #7: Passionflower

Researchers declare “Passionflower” to be one of the most valuable and effective herbal remedies to reduce anxiety and improve your sleep...FAST. Passionflower is a shrub found in the tropical parts of the United States and in South America. It produces a beautiful flower that grows into a large fruit. It’s been known by Native Americans for thousands of years to calm nerves and induce relaxation.

It’s been a favorite of herbalists and science is just starting to catch on. A study found that patients who were given an extract of Passionflower right before surgery were less anxious and nervous about the procedure. Another study found that Passionflower was just as effective as the drug benzodiazepine oxazepam for general anxiety, which is a common problem for those suffering from sleep problems. In another study published in *Phytotherapy Research*, scientists had 41 subjects drink Passionflower tea or a placebo for 7 days and measured the sleep quality between both groups.

At the end of the 7 days, those who drank the Passionflower tea reported better sleep quality compared to those who did not. This was further enhanced when they included hops, lemon balm and valerian root in the tea; a favorite combination for herbalists to induce deep and restful sleep. This safe and effective short-term alternative to zolpidem (Ambien) for primary insomnia provides sleep sufferers with hope for the future and allowing them to flush their addictive sleep meds down the toilet.

Summary

Feel free to try any one of these remedies or a combination of both in order to induce relaxation that allows you to drift away peacefully for 8 hours or more. Some people love using a combination of lavender oils and relaxation techniques, while others just prefer using the passionflower tea to help aid sleep. Being in a relaxed state of mind is an integral part of preparing our minds for a quality nights rest. By utilizing a combination of these ancient natural sleeping

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aids, you will be able to effectively block the negative effects associated with stress and anxiety, which are the main factors that inhibit us from falling asleep. In order to gain the maximum benefit of these methods, it is suggested that you utilize multiple techniques simultaneously to achieve better sleep and drop what doesn't work for you.

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