

IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP HEALTH

●●● Here's our guide to help you plan it out ●●●



1. Adjust your Environment

Anything you want to try from this list?

- Dim lights 1 hour before bed
- Eliminate blue screens 1 hour before bed
- Use a sunshine simulating alarm clock to help you sleep and wake up
- Use apps to track your sleep quality
 - Sleep cycle alarm clock
 - Sleep time: cycle alarm timer
- Lower room temperature to 16–19°C
- Use aromatherapy diffusers, candles, or sprays: peppermint, lavender
- Try weighted blankets as many people feel they improve their sleep & reduce their anxiety
- Make sure you have a comfortable mattress/pillow & breathable (100% cotton, linen, or bamboo) sheets
- Don't take naps (for more than 20 min) during the day
- Establish a regular time to sleep and wake up consistently on a daily basis (set your natural clock)
- If you don't sleep within 30 minutes, get out of bed. Go do something else for 10 minutes, and then try again when you're feeling more tired/drowsy



2. Nurture your Mental Health

Anything you want to try from this list?

- Journal (Try a gratitude journal like this or this if you need prompts)
- Meditate (If you have troubles, image a long road like this and as visualize your thoughts going past you as you move forward on this long road)
- Pray or practice a spiritual discipline to experience transcendence and calm
- Read a couple pages of a not-so-intriguing book (so you don't get hooped into reading the whole thing!)
- Practice Breathing techniques
- 4-7-8 Breathing technique: Exhale completely through your mouth making a whooshing sound. Close your lips, inhaling through your nose for a count of four. Then, hold your breath for seven seconds. Part your lips and exhale from your mouth for eight seconds. Repeat until desired.
- See my managing stress handout for a mindful breathing technique



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3. Check in on your Physical Health

Anything you want to try from this list?

- Enjoy an herbal tea (Sleepytime tea, chamomile tea, etc.) or warm milk before bed
- Avoid caffeine 6-8 hours before bed
- Avoid eating meals within 1-2 hours of sleeping
- Eat most of your food in the day (not in the evening) - heavy meals in the evening make it harder to fall asleep and may result in more uncomfortable feelings like acid reflux and indigestion
- Choose foods with sleep-inducing substances at lunch and dinner: Foods high in tryptophan will help more serotonin and melatonin get to your brain
 - Animal products: Dairy, seafood, meat, poultry
 - Whole grains & Rice
 - Pulses, legumes & seeds: beans, chickpeas, lentils, hazelnuts/peanuts, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds
- Walk for 20 minutes after eating dinner
- Avoid exercising rigorously later in the day
- Take probiotics for gut health: probioticchart.ca
- Try magnesium supplements (200-400 mg, with food)
- Take a relaxing warm bath or shower (or just a foot soak) with lavender bath salts



4. Assess your Sleep Posture

Anything you want to try from this list?

- Sleeping on your **back** allows your head, neck and spine to be in a neutral position but can be a dangerous position for people with sleep apnea as the tongue can fall back & block the breathing tube.
- Sleeping on your **side** with your torso and legs relatively straight is a good position for people who snore as this position keeps your airways open. Your spine is elongated in this posture, so you won't have back and neck pain.
- Sleeping in a **loose fetal position** (on your side, hunched torso and knees bent) on your left side (so your uterus isn't pressing against your liver) is great if you're pregnant. This position is also beneficial for people who snore just don't curl up too tightly!
 - Place a pillow between your knees to reduce strain on your hips.
- Avoid sleeping on your **stomach** as your spine will not be in a neutral position and this position puts pressure on your muscles and joints



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Don't overlook this underrated key to health... here's our tips!



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What are 2-3 things you would like to incorporate in this area?



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What are 1-2 things you would like to incorporate in this area?



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