

Cultivate: Sleep

Having a regular sleep and wake time and getting roughly seven hours sleep a night is associated with better mind and body health.



Use the sleep diary on the next page to establish a “baseline” this is what your sleep pattern looks like at the moment. After a week of this have a go at trying to implement some of the steps to better sleep. Some of these will be easier to begin than others so maybe try introducing them one at a time while monitoring how you sleep changes using the diary week by week.

Morning



Set a regular wake up time

Waking up at the same(ish) time every morning will help your body establish an anchor for getting up which starts the countdown to going to sleep.

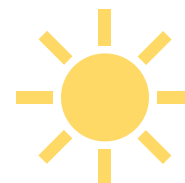
Don't rely on caffeine to wake up

While there is nothing wrong with a cup of coffee or tea in the morning, try not to rely on this wake you up in the morning. Instead have a big glass of water and maybe do some movement to get the blood flowing or splash your face with cold water/cool shower to get your body temperature raised.

Movement

To feel tired at night you really need to burn energy and tire yourself out. You could set some exercise goals (up to 30 minutes of rigorous exercise a few times a week) or try and just find more opportunities to move around in the day. Cardiovascular exercise like running or various sports can over time lower your resting heart rate which makes it easier to settle down relax at night.

Day



Learn and practice relaxation/stress reduction

This could easily apply to all morning, day and night. One of the biggest barriers to sleep is high levels of stress or “arousal”. While relaxation and sleep are different, being able to relax is important in order to allow sleep to happen. Have a look at Andy's article on grounding for more information. Try and do these exercises at regular points throughout the day.

Cut back on caffeine, nicotine and alcohol

These mind altering substances interfere with bodily functions. Stopping your intake of these substances, or at the least reducing them and being sure to avoid using them after a certain time of day will allow your body's natural sleep mechanisms to function.

Avoid napping

There is some research to suggest that a micronap (no longer than 20 minutes) can be helpful to get some rest during day. Sleeping any longer than this is going to make it harder to fall asleep at night, so if you can try to stay awake during the day even if the bed or sofa calls. This might be the perfect time to go for a walk or get some exercise or other movement in.

Night



Set a regular bed time

Just as waking up at the same time everyday helps your body regulate it's internal wake-sleep cycle so does going to bed at the same time every night. Calculate 7½ hours from your planned wake up time. This is your time to be in bed, lights out, screen(s) off!

Develop a bedtime routine

Having a routine which signals to your mind and body that it is time to start winding down is really important. In the past the natural setting of the sun would signal to us that it was time to stop activity and get ready to sleep. A few things that might be helpful to include: finish watching TV/work, tidy/clear up, put on relaxing music, dim lights, change into pyjamas, clean teeth/self-care, write down plans/jobs/worries for tomorrow, relaxation/meditation, all screens off, lights out.

Create the right conditions for sleep

This might be part of your routine but be sure to create the right conditions for sleep. Darkness signals to us that it is time to rest, so do what you can keep lighting to a minimum. Consider black out blinds, or an eye mask. Make sure your bedroom is quiet and comfortable, if it is safe to do so consider earplugs. This might mean looking into your mattress, duvets etc, or making sure you have the right temperature in the room. Finally keep your phone away, and if you are using it after dark be sure to use the blue light filter or equivalent as this light will continue to communicate to your body that you should be awake. Make use of do not disturb mode to stop any distracting notifications from keeping your mind aroused and blocking sleep.

Sleep Checklist

Use this checklist in combination with the sleep diary below in order to see what changes contribute to better sleep. If you learn anything else about sleep or feel there are other things you could do to support good sleep habits add it here:

- 1 **Set a regular wake up and bed time**
- 2 **Reduce caffeine intake (no more after 1pm)**
- 3 **Reduce alcohol intake (no more after 6pm)**
- 4 **Reduce nicotine intake**
- 5 **Regular practice of stress reduction**
- 6 **Regular exercise or movement**
(3 - 4 times a week 30 minutes of moderate to intense)
- 7 **Develop a bedtime routine**
- 8 **Switch off/unplug from screens or use a blue light filter**
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15

Sleep Diary

You can use this space to record your sleep patterns and habits. Record this for a week or two to see how much sleep you usually get. If you feel you need more or frequently don't feel rested try implementing some of the things from the checklist and see whether anything changes. Remember it can take a few weeks to start to see benefits from this kind of change and it will feel difficult at first.

Week beginning _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
How many hours did you sleep?							
Did you feel rested when you woke up?							
How many times did you wake up in the night?							
How would you rate your sleep quality overall? (1-5)*							

1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = very good, 5 = excellent

Changes tried this week:

Notes:

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