

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair sleeping peacefully on a white pillow. Her eyes are closed, and she has a slight smile on her face. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

# *Sleep Essentials*

**28 Day Guide to Optimize Your  
Sleep & Health**

# SLEEP

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It is essential for our health, our well being, our very existence. It helps our bodies to heal, cleanse, rebuild, it's tied to our hormone levels, cardio metabolic and brain health just to name a few.

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This natural need to sleep is rooted in our DNA and is regulated by the period gene that coordinates our body clock and all sub system internal clocks that basically speak to one another to make sure the system is in sync with the circadian rhythm.

The circadian rhythm is the 24 hour cycle that allows your body to prepare for changes to your environment. This rhythm guides and directs key functions over a 24 hour period that are essential for health and life.

Think of sleep being something as natural as winter, spring, summer and fall. You were made to live in harmony with the natural flow of life but when sleep disturbance begins, this is your first clear sign that your body is out of rhythm. Your clock is easily affected by your environment both positively and negatively keeping you either in or out of rhythm. What is so fascinating about sleep is that it is not always as simple as you need to take melatonin. In fact the more out of balance your life is, the greater the chance your not sleeping well.



# What does life “out of balance” mean?

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From constant demands, travel, stress, medications, skipping meals, varied sleep wake times, varied schedules, high exposure to electronics from phones to computers, each of these can pile up, one on top of the other, to create systemic imbalance. This causes your brain and body clocks to basically throw their hands up saying I give up. When your body gets to this point, it doesn't trust you.

## **Here is the good news...**

There is a true path back to restoring your sleep, resetting your bodies clock so you can reclaim your energy, health and vital life! Think of this path like restoring trust between your daily life and your body. Look at this as a gift- your body is talking- sure you may not be sleeping now- but you will be soon, as long as you work WITH your body. It's time to tune in, notice and take small, simple, consistent steps to reset your inner clock for optimal sleep and wellbeing.

## **What to Expect:**

1. Identify with our quiz what areas may be most significantly impacting your ability to sleep
2. Review your 28 day reset plan
3. Each day take action and begin noticing your sleep improve





# What is Impacting My Sleep?

Take the following quiz by answering the following questions. It is important to note each section explains the rating scale, be sure to read and rate accurately.

## **Sleep:** Rate Your Sleep Answers 1-4. (1 is YES- 4 is NO)

- I get 7-9 hours of sleep each night 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I wake up energized and refreshed 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I sleep through the night 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I go to bed at the same time each night 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I make my room dark and quite for bedtime 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I make sure to turn off all electronics at least 30 minutes before bed 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I practice relaxation like journaling or meditation before bed 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Light:** 1-4 (1 is NO- 4 is YES)

- I don't get natural sunlight exposure everyday for at least 15 minutes 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I watch tv or my device until bed 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I keep my tv or device on to fall asleep 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I have a computer or device in my bedroom 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I have light coming into my bedroom ( from clocks, windows, devices, etc) 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I turn lights on if I get up at night 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Stress:** Rate Your Following Stress Levels (1 is the least 4 is the most)

- Work : 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Family: 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Relationship: 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Finances: 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Health: 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Nutrition:** Rate 1-4 (1 is NO- 4 is YES any number in between is how you will rate the frequency)

- I skip meals 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I drink alcohol most evenings before bed 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I don't eat breakfast 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I drink coffee after 1 pm each day 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I eat dessert or something sweet after dinner 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Fitness:** 1-4 (1 is YES - 4 is NO)

- I exercise for 20 minutes or more every day 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- I exercise at the same time of day each time I workout 1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Your Score Results:

**85-100 You are in extreme sleep dysregulation.** Identify Your greatest area of imbalance and add the core recommendation to the 28 day plan.

**70-84 You are in high sleep dysregulation.** Identify your greatest area of imbalance and add the core recommendation to the 28 day plan.

**50-69 You are in moderate sleep dysregulation.** Identify your greatest area of imbalance and add the core recommendation to the 28 day plan.

**Less than 50 with symptoms- you are mild sleep dysregulation.** Even though your score is low, if you are struggling with poor sleep quality, it's still important for you to look at your scores and notice which area you had the greatest disturbance. A 1 for you could be like a 4 for someone else. Look for the clues and signs so you can gain the insight and awareness you need to change your sleep habits for better quality sleep and overall wellbeing.

## How to Optimize Your Sleep Based on Your Score

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**Remember-** sleep is impacted and governed by your body clock. When this clock becomes disrupted, the goal is to identify the source so you can begin to take action and implement new habits and behaviors that will reset and realign you to the circadian rhythm.

From the quiz above, you should now have an understanding of which areas you are suffering with the greatest imbalance. Be sure to read the recommendations below and choose the steps that are the right fit for you.

**Sleep:** When you have inconsistency in your sleep quality or duration the first place to begin is to re-establish consistency.

## Create a REGULAR Sleep Schedule

**Set a Bedtime:** Choose a time at which you normally feel tired. Try not to break this routine, especially on weekends when it is quite tempting to stay up late. If you don't feel tired- think about when you go on vacation, away from any distractions, what time do you find yourself ready to sleep?

Let this be your fall asleep goal. If the time you choose is different than what you are currently doing, you will need to adjust by making small incremental changes like 15 minutes earlier or later on each day.

**Set a Wake Up Time:** Set a specific wake time and stick to it, even on weekends. If you get up without the use of an alarm clock, it is an indication that you are getting enough sleep. However, if you need an alarm clock to get up, it indicates that you aren't getting enough sleep and you need to set up an earlier bedtime.

You will need to experiment with this schedule because you could be in sleep debt and need to catch up first. The other reason is that each person has an optimal sleep cycle, you could be the person that is ideal with 7 hours or you may need 8 ½ hours. Find your sweet spot. If you are waking up without the alarm and feeling refreshed then you are in your sweet spot.





# Create a Light Plan

**Light is the most powerful modulator of sleep** due to the release or suppression of melatonin, your sleep hormone.

Melatonin tells the body when to sleep and when to wake. In other words, it is the on-off switch for your sleep. From an evolutionary standpoint, nature was the perfect stimulus for melatonin; it rose with the sunset and dropped with the sunrise. Now thanks to modern technology and our must have devices, our natural cues are being severely impacted keeping the body in a state of confusion.

**To optimize melatonin through light signaling - do the following:**

## **Increasing light exposure during day**

If you want to suppress your melatonin during the day, you should increase your exposure to light.

- You can remove your sunglasses and let light onto your face.
- During breaks from work, you should spend more time outside in the light, doing exercise, walking or just exploring around.
- You should also let as much light enter your work place as possible by opening the curtains and blinds. If you are in a windowless environment then make sure you get some full spectrum light exposure. Some studies indicate that having the full spectrum light striking the eye is the most important way to get exposure but there are also several other circadian "clocks" in other organ, specifically the skin and light exposure can activate melanocytes and fibroblasts to activate circadian genes.

## **Boost melatonin production at night**

In order to allow the natural surge of melatonin production in the evening it is important to practice light reduction techniques.

- Reduce your exposure and looking at TV's, smart phones, or computer screens within an hour or two of bed.
- Keep light levels low in the evening, most artificial lighting is going to have an impact on limiting your melatonin production.
- It is also important to blackout your room – completely. For good sleep hygiene, it should be dark enough that you have difficulty telling whether your eyes are open or closed. Get blackout curtains or blinds and no clock lights.
- If you have to get up in the night to use the bathroom, make sure you have some very low intensity motion activated night-lights. Do your best to prevent turning lights on.

# Relaxation Plan

A busy brain and stress filled life is a perfect recipe for a sleepless night. This section will give you key relaxation strategies to help you calm your mind and body for deep sleep. For more information on stress, see the stress section of this program.

**Sound.** To make your bedroom sleep friendly; the first thing you need to do is to avoid or eliminate all unnecessary noise. If you can't avoid the sounds like city traffic or barking of dogs, you should mask them with a white noise generator or wearing earplugs.

**Temperature.** Researchers have found that pre-bed drop in body temperature is the basic trigger for sleep onset. To ensure a cool room, reduce the temperature in your room and consider a cool top mattress. Wear light, comfortable clothing to bed to maintain a cool body temperature.

**Comfort.** Your bed should be comfortable. A great mattress is the best investment in your health that you can make. Be sure to check your pillow, sometimes small things make a big difference in how you sleep. Your Bed is for Sleeping – Don't use your bed for anything other than sleeping or sex so that your body associates the bed with sleep. If you use your bed for other activities like working, eating, or watching TV, it will be harder for you to sleep at night. The best thing that will ever happen to your sleep and sex life will occur when you remove the TV from the bedroom.

**Take an Epsom Salt Bath.** Epsom Salt baths are rich in magnesium which is a key mineral for muscle function, relaxation and promotes a sense of calm. During the bath, your muscles soak in the magnesium and you enjoy the relaxing benefits that help you get a good night's sleep.

**Mindful Meditation.** Studies show that even just 10 minutes of daily meditation can result in a significant improvement in sleep. To start, check out our suggested apps or guided meditations in the stress section.

**What Went Well.** Each night take a few minutes to write down 1-3 things that went well and WHY. Practicing this positive psychology mindset exercise allows your brain each day to notice all that is good in your life. It shifts us from the negative, stress and strain to insight, curiosity and openness that often allows increased feelings of happiness and wellbeing. This will decrease the level of stress hormones (cortisol) and increase the levels of relaxing substances like endorphins, helping you to sleep.

**Deep Breathing.** Close your eyes and breathe deeply, with each breath deeper than the last.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** Tense a muscle (clench a fist for instance) as tightly as you can, then relax. Do this for all muscles of your body.

**Visualization.** Close your eyes and imagine a place or activity that is peaceful and calming.

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# Food & Fitness

What you eat and when you move impact your internal body clock and circadian rhythm. To continue "building trust" and reset consistency within your body to optimize sleep, food and fitness matters.

**Eat the Same Time Daily.** Whether you practice intermittent fasting, eat 3, 4 or 6 times a day, the key is to be consistent. Eat within 20 minutes of the same time everyday for each meal. If however you have been skipping breakfast and your sleep is moderate to severe in disruption, it is highly recommended to eat breakfast. This will prep your brain and hormones helping to sync your systems back up.

**Eat Real Food.** A healthy balanced diet of real food is going to help to optimize your physiology so that the body is able to function at its best. We are constantly looking for techniques or supplements that will optimize our function but the truth is, it all starts from a base of healthy nutrition.

**Reduce to Remove Alcohol.** Many people believe that alcohol helps them fall asleep and it will but then you pay the price. You should understand that although alcohol makes you sleep faster, it reduces the quality of your sleep and may wake you up later at night. It disrupts normal sleep-wake rhythms as well so if sleep is your goal, it's time to reduce alcohol consumption to no more than 6 ounces a night stopping 2 hours before bed.

**Watch the Caffeine.** Caffeine is a known brain stimulant and can cause sleep problems. It takes about 6 hours for it to lose its potency and can throw off your sleep if you are drinking it after 3 pm. Begin to reduce your daily consumption with a goal to only drink it in the morning. IF you can't stop the afternoon cup, only drink 3-4 ounces of black, stay away from the sugary coffee drinks.

**Exercise Regularly.** You will sleep deeply if you exercise regularly but not right before bedtime, exercising close to bedtime can result in cortisol elevation which will impair your melatonin release. You don't have to do any strenuous exercises to reap the benefits; doing light aerobic exercises for 10-20 minutes daily is enough. Exercise is believed to help with sleep due to its ability to boost endorphins and melatonin levels and it will chronically decrease cortisol levels. For more information on exercise, visit the fitness section of this program.

While it may seem like there is a lot to sleep, your formula is as personal as you.

**Remember- sleep is the body's way of letting you know one or more areas of your life are out of balance.** Your body clock is regulated by balance and flow, when you are out of rhythm, symptoms appear. The longer this goes on, the more pronounced they come and begin impacting various systems of your body, health and life. This simple guide gives you a beginning point to identify what could be causing your sleep imbalance and how to step by step take an action at a time, to enhance your sleep, health and life.

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# Your 28 Days at a Glance

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Use this week at a glance suggestion to help focus your actions

## Week 1:

**Set Your Sleep Plan** to include your wake/ sleep schedule, eliminate light, optimize sound for a peaceful nights sleep.

## Week 2:

**Relax** Sleep Stress Away. If you have a busy brain that just wants to keep going, it will be essential for you to begin in week 2 to practice relaxation techniques outlined below. Each night commit to just 5 short minutes. If you can go longer, great, 20 is max.

## Week 3:

**Notice and Adjust.** Are you getting closer to your fall asleep and wake up goal but still need to adjust? Are you trying to relax but still are not in zen? This is the week to make your next round of small adjustments remembering 15 is the magic number. Shift your sleep or wake up time, turn off your favorite device, relax, all in small 15 minute doses. Small consistent actions a bit at a time WILL produce life changing sleep results.

**Remember-** over this 28 day program, you are restoring TRUST with your body, your environment and habits. The goal is to work together with yourself vs. against. Treasure your sleep. It's the most important path back to a healthy, vital YOU.

## Week 4:

**Food & Fitness Matters.** Now that you are in a good rhythm with your sleep wake, light and relaxation plan, it's time to focus on the other internal clocks that can help you quickly get back on track for great sleep.

Food cycles are essential for building trust and resetting your clock. Be sure to eat BF, Lunch and Dinner within 20 minutes of the same time everyday. This doesn't mean you need to eat huge meals, refer to the nutrition section for guidance. Just like meal time links to the circadian rhythm, so too does activity. When you wake up and move at the same time every day, your brain knows how to prepare your hormones. Try incorporating 5 minutes every morning for some stretching and breathwork to energize your body and mind.

Success does not occur in one action or one moment.  
It is a series of small right actions and moments that  
build upon themselves to create one large change.

Give yourself time, FOCUS on ONE action a week. When you feel you have mastered it, be it your new bed time or calming your brain with a breathing exercise, then move on to the next item on your list. One by one, each new action, each new behavior that turns into a new habit creates a compounding effect of restoring your health. It's true that in as little as 28 days, you can turn your health around, it just takes you staying committed to YOU.

To help you along the journey, we recommend that you track your actions and progress and be sure to take the quiz again at the end of the 28 days so you can see just how far you have come. Here's to you getting great sleep.

Tune in each day and rate your progress on a scale of 1-10. Be sure to notice what is improving bit by bit, day by day- it's a process and you are on your way to deep, restorative, sleep!

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ |
| Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ | Bed Time ____<br>Wake Up ____<br>Energy ____<br>Overall ____ |
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