Getting Better Sleep For
Total Body, Mind, And Emotional Health

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By Jodi Aman

A consistent sleep routine is one of the most important commitments we can make to our physical and emotional wellbeing! Ideally we should be getting 7.5-9 hours of sleep per night and it is best if these are the same hours.

There are many things that keep us from sleeping better, but it all boils down to stress. Stress keeps us from sleeping, but what is worse is that stress is caused by lack of sleep.

Lack of sleep has us out of touch with our own skills and abilities, and decreases our ability to see the big picture. Lack of sleep can create a context for mental health troubles, even when the rest of your life is smooth. But when you have other stressors, too little sleep exponentially compound the problem. Flashbacks increase, anxiety increases, sadness is more consuming, loneliness increases, self esteem plummets, and patience decreases when we don't get enough z's.

Our immune system needs sleep more than anything else. Sleep is when the body and mind recover and replenish. Our brain cleans itself out. The fluid between the synapsis in our brain cells clean each night. When we do not get enough sleep this liquid gets thicker and syrupy. No wonder it is hard to think straight when we are tired, because it is literally hard to think- thoughts have trouble traveling

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How To Get Better Sleep

1. Make sleep a priority. We often take from our sleep time, whenever we run out of time in our day to get our things done. This is the quickest way to burn out. This is not a time saver! Tasks end up taking longer when we are sleep deprived.

2. Go to bed at the same time each night.

3. Wake at the same time each morning.

4. Start sleep deprived. Don't sleep late in the morning and expect yourself to go to bed early to change your schedule. You must begin by getting up at the desired time. You can wake up when you are tired, but it is much harder to fall asleep if you are not tired. This is one of the biggest mistakes people make.

5. Nix the nap if you are already having a problem falling asleep or waking up. Nap only if neither of these are a problem.

6. Keep electronics out of the bedroom. Not only are these stimulating, but they give off electromagnetic energy.

7. Keep plants out of the bedroom. Plants give us oxygen during the day but take it in at night, so they do not belong in the bedroom. Plants in the rest of the house are beneficial though!

8. Cut out caffeine. This may be obvious but so many people don't make this connection.

9. De-clutter your bedroom. Even under your bed. It helps clear the mind.

10. No heavy or violent shows or video games before bed.

11. Exercise regularly, but not close to bedtime.

12. Have a good bedtime routine. Once you find something you like, do the same thing each night.

Bedtime Routine Ideas To Get better Sleep

1. Take a warm bath.

2. Massage your forehead, back or feet with sesame, jojoba or olive oil. Add a drop of a calming essential oil for best results.

3. Have a hot drink. (Hot milk is not just an old wife's tale. The sugar in it helps us sleep and the heat calms the nervous system. Herbal tea is good too.)

4. Meditate or pray before sleep. Clear your mind, focus on your breath or do my meditations. Imagine white light coming through your body three times.

5. Keep a notebook by your bed to write down "to do's" or "worry's" that might be filling your head.

6. Think of something positive and happy before bed. Take some deep breaths and think about a happy memory. Fill yourself with the joy of this memory.

7. Read or listen to music when you are having trouble clearing your mind.

8. If you are really struggling with a busy mind, give it something to do. Such as breathe and count, or walk through the scenes of a movie or TV show you just saw (make sure the theme is happy). Or take a tour of an old house/apartment that you lived or spent time in.

See also: Rest Assured. Get Better Sleep.