

Improving Sleep

Quality & Quantity



Carolyn Vasilevich Fitness & Nutrition

1. Keep a regular schedule. Our bodies like regularity. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time. With a regular schedule, your body will know when to release calming hormones before bed, and stimulating hormones to wake up.
2. Keep alcohol and caffeine moderate. Both will interfere with sleep. Try to avoid caffeine within 8-9 hours of your bedtime.
3. Eat and drink appropriately. A regular to smallish-sized meal about 2-3 hours before bed, one that is balanced in nutrients (at least 30g of protein and carbohydrates), can help facilitate sleep. Try not to drink too much liquid in the hours before bed, which will help you avoid waking up for bathroom breaks.
4. If you find an active mind keeps you awake: Do a brain dump. Take a few minutes to write out a list of whatever is bugging you. Whatever is in your brain, get it out and onto paper.
5. Turn off electronics. Digital devices stimulate our brain. I recommend unplugging from all screens at least 30 minutes before bed, and using blue light blocking glasses after sunset or around 2 hours before going to sleep. This includes television, computers, and smartphones. The screens release a blue light that prevents our brain from preparing for sleep.
6. Stretch / read / de-stress before bed. Consider trying some yoga poses, reading, breath work, or meditation.
7. Go to bed before midnight. This is better aligned with natural light cycles.
8. Set an alarm to go to bed. Work backwards and add buffer time: If you need to wake up at 6 AM and want to be in bed for 8 hours, start moving towards bed around 9:30 PM with lights out by 10. Keep in mind that time in bed versus time actually asleep differs, so in the above example, you would achieve around 7 hrs of actual sleep.
9. Exercise regularly. Physical movement (especially outdoors) can promote restful sleep at night.

10. Take a bath or shower. A warm bath with epsom salts or even a cool shower (depending on personal preference) can promote restful sleep.
11. Keep the room dark. This means curtains, shades, and / or a sleep mask.
12. Try to maintain a stress-free / clutter-free bedroom. Get rid of stacks of mail, boxes, clothes strewn about, etc.
13. Keep it cool. Anywhere from 60-68 F (15-20 C) appears to work best at night. Eight Sleep is a great brand to check out if you need a mattress cooler, this is a must for me on hot summer nights.
14. Use white noise. For instance, turn on a fan, humidifier or HEPA filter.
15. Get outside in the sunlight and fresh air during the day. Viewing sunlight for 10-15 minutes within the first 30 minutes of waking will promote wakefulness and the ability to focus throughout the day. This also starts a timer for the onset of melatonin production. For shift workers, try to get lots of bright light and movement when you should normally be awake.