

# Handout:

## Sleep Best Practices

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## *Morning routines*

- Get morning light 2-10 min.
- Follow a consistent sleep routine (+/- 15 min.)

## *Day time routines*

- Physiological sigh
- Panoramic vision 2-4 times/day
- Yoga Nidra 10-30 min.
- Last coffee 6-8 hours before bedtime

## *Evening routines*

- Wear blue blockers 1-2 hours before bedtime
- Dim lights & Switch-off all ceiling lights
- Make bedroom cooler
- Hot shower or bath 1 hour before bed
- Make bedroom pitch dark
- Charge your mobile away from bed / bedroom

## *Nighttime routines*

- Listen to binaural music 10-15 min.
- Do "4-7-8" breathing 8 cycles in bed
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

# GET MORNING LIGHT



- Daylight is key to regulating daily sleep patterns and your circadian rhythm.
- Try to get outside in **natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day**. If possible, wake up with the sun or use very bright lights in the morning. Using a wakeup light as an alarm clock will also help you.
- **Look in the direction of rising sun** (*Note!* Not directly but indirectly) for **2-10 minutes**. Ideally as soon as you've woken up but latest within 2 hours. If it's clear and sunny, 2 minutes is enough; if completely overcast then 10 minutes.
- If you're jet-lagged, go for a brief walk (run or exercise) in day-light as soon you wake up.

Benefit:

✓ To maintain Circadian rhythm

# FOLLOW A CONSISTENT SLEEP ROUTINE

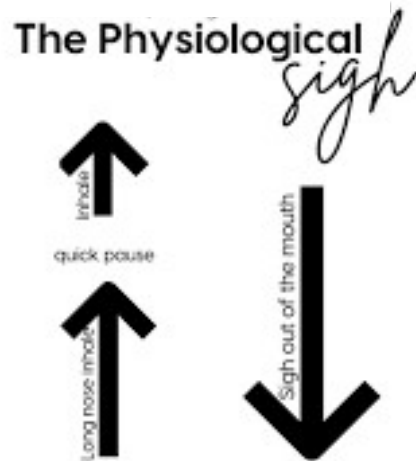


- Go to bed to sleep and wake up at the same time every day of the week, including weekends.
- Your circadian rhythm, which controls the sleep hormone melatonin and other sleep processes, finds it hard to adjust to irregular sleep schedules.
- Set an alarm for your wind-down time to begin.
- Having a lie in during the weekend won't make up for the lack of sleep during the week. It'll make it harder to wake on Monday.

Benefit:

- ✓ To maintain Circadian rhythm

# DO PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGH



- Two inhales (one after the other in immediate succession) and a long exhale. It opens up tiny air sacs at the end of pur bronchioles (tiny branches of air tubes in the lungs called alveoli) for more CO<sub>2</sub> offloading.
- Do it once; 2-3 times for optimum result.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc>

Benefit:

- ✓ Shift to “rest and digest” mode

# SHIFT TO A PANORAMIC VISION OFTEN



- Take a micro break from your work, move your focused vision away from the screen for a minute or two.
- Widen your vision and try to see something towards horizon, if possible.
- If not, try to see something 6 m (or more) away from you.
- Try to do it ideally every 25 minutes, otherwise every 55 minutes.

Benefit:

✓ Shift to “rest and digest” mode

# DO YOGA-NIDRA



- Do Yoga-Nidra—a NSDR\* technique

As part of your wind down routine in the evening:

- Do it for 10-30 minutes as per the need.
- Ten minutes as a regular wind down routine; a longer session if in a very high level of alertness or stressed.

While struggling to fall back to sleep:

- Do it for 10 minutes.

➤ A few resources:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7H0FKzeuVV&t=531s>

- <https://apps.apple.com/se/app/yoga-nidra-relaxation-lite/id444707986?l=en>



Benefit:

- ✓ Shift to “rest and digest” mode

\*Non-sleep deep relaxation

# AVOID CAFFEINE 6-8 HOURS AND NICOTINE 2-3 HOURS BEFORE BED



- Coffee, colas, certain teas, and chocolate contain the stimulant caffeine, and its effects can take as long as four-to-eight hours to wear off significantly. Therefore, a cup of coffee in the late afternoon can make it hard for you to fall asleep at night.
- Nicotine is also a stimulant, often causing smokers to sleep lightly. In addition, smokers often wake up early in the morning because of nicotine withdrawal.

Benefit:

✓ To shift to rest and digest mode



# WEAR 'BLUE-LIGHT BLOCKER' GLASSES



- To ensure appropriately timed melatonin release, you should wear 'Blue-light blocker' glasses<sup>1</sup>, which have orange lenses.
- Exposure to bright and/or blue light during final hours before going to bed make a significant difference in your quantity and quality of sleep.
- If you must look at a LED screen (laptop, mobile, tablet or TV) during these two hours, viewing the screen through blocker glasses will at least minimize the blue-light exposure.
- Keep them on until all bright or white lights are out, even while brushing your teeth.

Benefit:

✓ Shift to and remain in “rest and digest” mode

# MAKE YOUR BEDROOM GLOW



- Ideally you should use your bedroom only for sleep (and intimate activities), which means you should, if possible, wind-down in another room.
- But if you do have to wind down in your bedroom before sleeping, **replace the bright and/or LED lightbulbs** with something softer, ideally amber-toned incandescent bulbs.

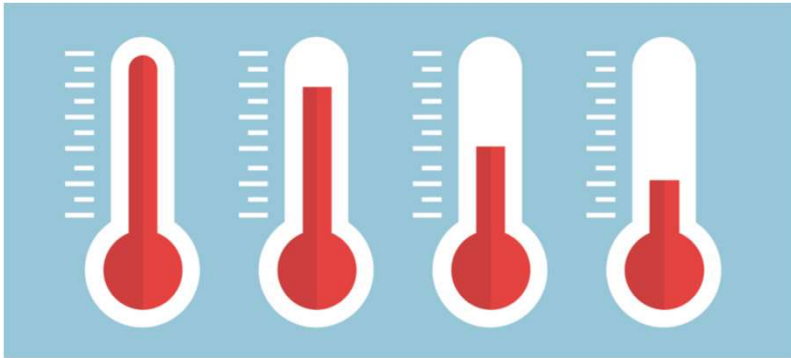


- Warm, dim, orange light does not interrupt your melatonin secretion, helping you fall asleep faster and get a better quality of sleep.
- A little focus on your lighting will help you in shifting quickly to 'rest-and-digest mode'.

Benefit:

- ✓ Shift to and remain in "rest and digest" mode

# MAKE YOUR BEDROOM COOLER

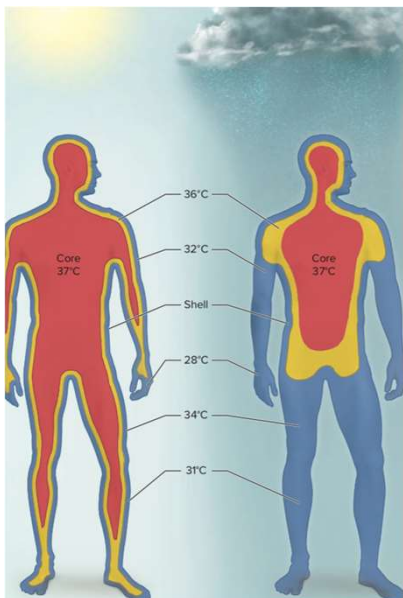


- Maintain your bedroom temperature around 17-19°C when you sleep.
- Adjust the thermostat, or open the window for a while, before you settle down in the bedroom to sleep.
  - When you go to sleep your bedroom temperature should be cooler than rest of your home. It sends a sleep signal to the brain.
  - A cooler bedroom helps your body maintain a lower core body temperature during major part of the night, helping you in getting a better quality of sleep.

Benefit:

✓ Sleep signal to brain

# TAKE A HOT BATH (OR SHOWER) BEFORE BED



- Take a hot shower or bath within 30-60 minutes before bedtime.
  - If you can't do that, wash for a couple of minutes your hands and feet with hot water and face with tepid water. Be careful to not use too hot water!
  - Sauna, steam-bath or hot jacuzzi would give similar benefits.
  - You could add Epsom salts to your bath, which infuses rest-inducing and muscle-relaxing magnesium into your tissues, which helps mitigate stress and inflammation.
  - You could also add Lavender oil, a tried-and-tested classic, which helps you to relax and to shift into 'rest-and-digest mode' making you fall asleep faster.
- A hot shower or bath makes your core temperature drop as your blood rushes from the inner parts of the body to your periphery. The drop may help you feel sleepy, while the bath itself can help you relax and wind down, so you are ready to sleep. It helps trigger sleep because a cooling body temperature is a natural part of your sleep rhythm.

Benefit:

✓ Shift to "rest and digest" mode

# MAKE YOUR BEDROOM DARK AND LIGHT PROOF

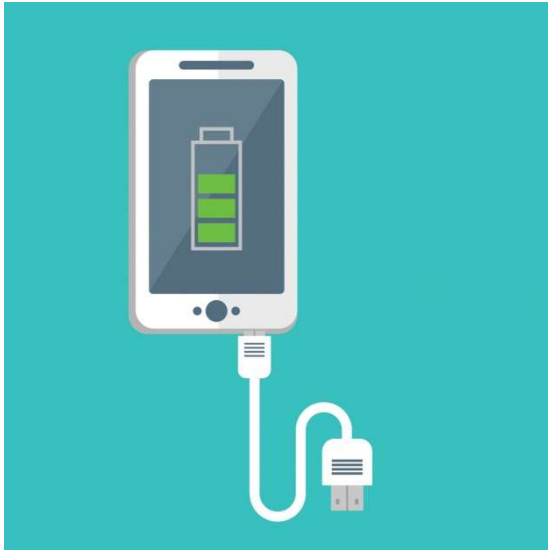


- Survey your bedroom for unwelcome light.
- Since the receptors in our eyes are photosensitive (even when we are asleep), illumination from the street outside our windows, and glowing lights on alarm clock, gadgets (e.g., TV), and air conditioners, can all disrupt our sleep rhythm.
- Do a light detox: make your bedroom a light proof sanctuary by using blackout blinds or curtains, removing electronics, and covering any remaining blips of electronic light with duct tape.
- If you must, have a very dim, ideally red-color, non-LED light as a night light in your bedroom.

Benefit:

✓ Remain in “rest and digest” mode

# CHARGE YOUR MOBILE AWAY FROM BED / BEDROOM



- Charge your mobile ideally in the kitchen, living room or hallway
- If you must charge it in the bedroom, please do so far away from the bed.

Benefit:

✓ Shift to “rest and digest” mode

# DIM THE LIGHTS ELSEWHERE IN YOUR HOME

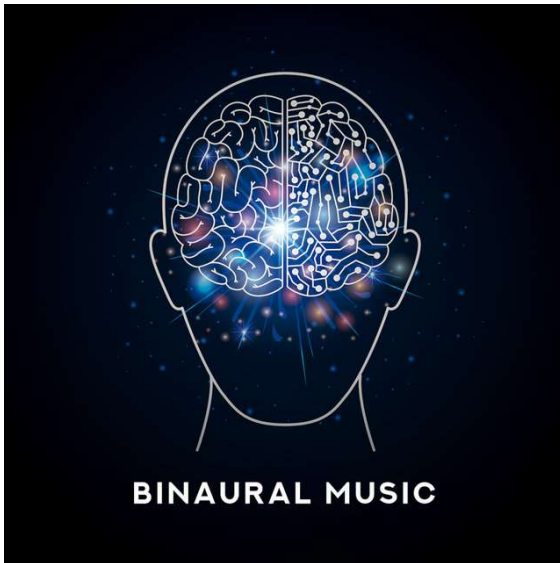


- **Dimming the lights in your home** will help contribute to an easier transition to sleep. However, it's also a good idea to complete 'brightly-lit' activities earlier in the evening, then spend your last **two hours** before bed in a more softly lit atmosphere in your home.
- **Use table lamps or lamps placed on floor**—incandescent lights, amber lamps, salt lamps, or glow lights—to imitate the glow from a campfire, which you'll find helps you profoundly in winding down and enabling melatonin secretion.
- You may even consider **smart lighting** to create an amber wash-off light at night.
- It's worth saying once again that any blue light will stimulate your circadian rhythm the wrong way. If you are watching TV, surfing or reading under bright or LED lights, it's going to be harder to wind down.

Benefit:

- ✓ Shift to and remain in "rest and digest" mode

# LISTEN TO BINAURAL MUSIC TO WIND DOWN



- Listen to binaural music to wind down before going to sleep.
- It can help you in slowing down activity level in your brain, heart beat and blood pressure. As a result you should be able to fall asleep faster and get to deep sleep quicker.
- Some useful links:
  - An explanation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvTYxjpP6H4>
  - <https://hemi-sync.com/experience/sleep/>
  - <https://unwind.syncproject.co/#/session>
  - A sample playlist on Spotify:  
<https://open.spotify.com/artist/5C95YXNLYaqbZjhwXMjZ4r>
- Listening to music in general distracts you from anxious thoughts, reduces cortisol levels and reduces / relieves acute and chronic physical pain.
- It also provides better sleep because the music calms parts of the autonomic nervous system so that breathing becomes slower.



# 4-7-8 BREATHING AND PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



- As you lie in bed with lights out, try spending about ten minutes of doing a simple practice that combines muscle relaxation with breathing.
- You can begin by using the '4-7-8\*' breathing technique to relax and decompress.
- Then do 'progressive muscle relaxation', which allows you relax your entire body by tensing and relaxing a series of muscles one-by-one.
- 4-7-8 breathing demo by Dr. Andrew Weil  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRPh\\_GaiL8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRPh_GaiL8s)
- Please refer to next slide for progressive muscle relaxation instructions.

Benefit:

✓ Shift to "rest and digest" mode

\*The 4-7-8 breathing technique, also known as "relaxing breath," involves breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 seconds, and exhaling for 8 seconds.

# PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION SCRIPT

- Take a deep breath and raise your eyebrows as high as possible for 5 seconds. This will tighten your forehead muscles. Hold it for 5 seconds.
- Exhale quickly through your mouth and relax your muscles immediately and feel the tension drop. Wait 10 seconds.
- Smile widely to create tension in your cheeks. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.
- Pause 10 seconds.
- Squint with your eyes shut. Hold 5 seconds. Relax.
- Pause 10 seconds.
- Tilt your head slightly back so you're comfortably looking at the ceiling. Hold 5 seconds. Relax as your neck sinks back into the pillow.
- Pause 10 seconds.
- Keep moving down the rest of the body, from your triceps to chest, thighs to feet.
- Let yourself fall asleep, even if you don't finish tensing and relaxing the rest of your body.
- As you do this, focus on how relaxed and heavy your body feels when it's relaxed and in a comfortable state.