

# Sleep Better Tonight

SOME SLEEP ADVICE IS SIMPLE, SOME MORE OFFBEAT. THE MYTHS, THE TRUTHS—YOUR PATH TO DEEPER SLEEP.



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# The Basics of Good Sleep

BY KALIA KELMENSEN

**I USED TO BE** really good at sleeping. I would crash out as soon as my head hit the pillow and barely move until there was light in the sky. Then I had kids and found out what sleep deprivation is all about. When I could finally sleep through the night again, it was like rediscovering a long lost friendship.

Ironically, when my kids were old enough that I wondered if they would ever wake up in the morning, I stopped sleeping through the night for no obvious reason. In retrospect, I was grieving

the loss of my father, but I would startle awake around 1:30 am, unable to get myself back to sleep until nearly dawn. It felt like a cruel kind of heart-broken torture.

If this sounds familiar, know that you are not up alone in the middle of the night. According to a 2007 National Sleep Foundation study, 67 percent of American women frequently experience disturbances to their sleep. That's a lot of tossing and turning. Shelby Harris, a sleep disorder specialist and author of *The Women's Guide to*

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*Overcoming Insomnia*, suggests addressing these five common sleep disruptors as a first step to getting a good night's sleep:

**1 Drinking within three hours of bedtime.** This means no alcohol within three hours of bedtime because, although it may help get you to sleep, you get less quality sleep as its effects wear off. You also want to limit any kind of liquid within these three hours because nothing disrupts a good night's sleep like needing to use the bathroom.

**2 Keeping your bedroom too warm and bright.** Your body naturally cools down as you sink deeper into sleep. If your room is too warm, it counteracts this natural process, disrupting your sleep cycle. Similarly, any light sources, even very dim electronics, will disrupt your body's production of melatonin, which is a crucial hormone that directs your sleep/wake cycle.

**3 Exercising and bathing right before bed.** Harris suggests working out four to six hours before bedtime, which will give your body a chance to warm up, and then, importantly, cool down enough to support your body's prime temperature for sleep. Similarly, having a warm shower or bath is best done one-and-a-half to two hours before bed, maximizing the chances that, come morning, not only will you be clean, but you'll also be rested.

**4 Sleeping in on the weekend.** It feels so luxurious to roll over and go back to sleep on a Sunday, but if sleep is not your best friend yet, it's best to keep your bedtime and your waking time consistent. It might not be the most fun friendship, but Harris insists that your alarm clock will be your BFF if you wake to it every single day.



**5 Sneaking a peak.** With the current obsession/addiction to technology, it can be tricky to turn off devices an hour before bed—and to keep them off. Blue light disrupts the body's production of melatonin, which is pivotal to supporting deep sleep. Also, avoid peeking at the clock when you wake up in the middle of the night. All it will do is make you stressed out or anxious about not getting enough sleep.

Harris lays out a program that begins with keeping a sleep diary so you can get a sense of your natural schedule and notice any areas where you could improve your sleep hygiene. She also stresses the importance of your sleep drive and includes ways that you can increase your “sleep appetite” and combine it with your circadian rhythm to maximize your ability to sleep through the night. If you are hungry for sleep, this is an interesting path to meander down. Essentially, you are meant to use your sleep diary to structure your time in bed so that you are only in bed while you are sleeping. That means getting out of bed if you wake up in the night and getting out of bed as soon as the alarm goes off.

For anyone who hasn't had to deal with sleep issues, Harris' advice can feel restrictive—indeed she calls it sleep restriction—and daunting, but if you're operating on many nights (or months) of poor sleep, try it. You could finally get the sleep of your dreams. **S&H**





# Release Stress for a Good Night's Sleep

BY TRACI PEDERSON

**DO YOU TEND TO RUMINATE** on the negative events of your past or the fears of tomorrow? Many of us do. When you allow this pattern to continue, however, daily stresses and traumas have a way of building themselves up in your psyche, and even in your body, causing chronic mental and physical tension, which can make getting to sleep at night a very real challenge.

More than 3 in 10 adults in the U.S. suffer from brief symptoms of insomnia, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. One in 10 has a chronic insomnia disorder in which the sufferer has trouble sleeping at least three times a week for at least three months. Symptoms of anxiety and depression are often the driving forces of these sleepless nights, which can eventually turn into a continual cycle of depression, no sleep, and more depression.

But why is it so hard to relax at night? When you are still, your brain often gravitates toward the most fearful

thought in an attempt to “protect” you from impending doom. If there were a snake under your bed, this would be helpful, but today’s worries tend to be built-up thoughts of yesterday’s disappointments and the fears of tomorrow—mostly mind tricks. There is a time for productive thinking about real problems, of course, but much of our time spent worrying is unproductive.

Finding your center—your innermost self and place of perfect calm—is paramount to getting a good night’s sleep. Before you get into bed, make an intention to let go of your worries and to be truly conscious of where your thoughts are taking you. You don’t have to follow them wherever they lead.

Next, understand that you can retrain your brain to focus on the positive and the present moment. It really is okay to let go of your worries and allow yourself to get a good night’s sleep. If need be, give yourself permission to deal with the problem tomorrow morning after you

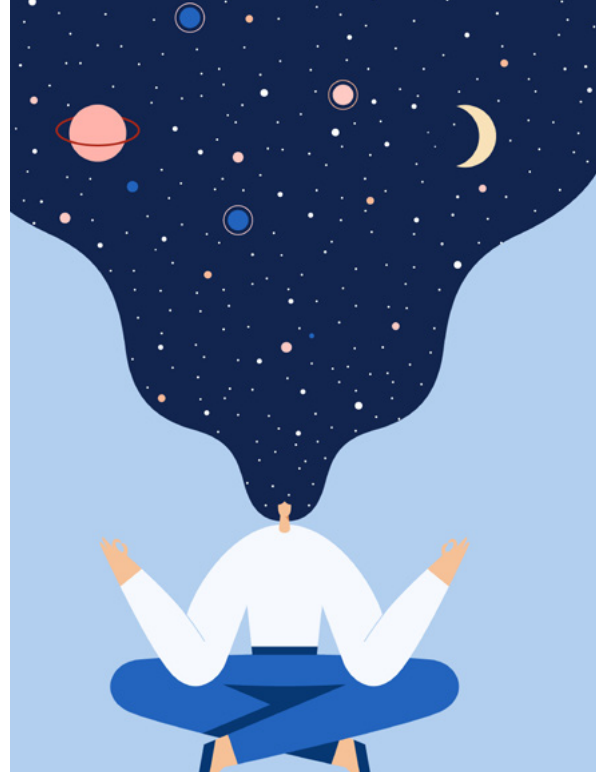
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get some rest and a fresh perspective.

Try these four centering techniques before bed to help relax you both mentally and physically.

- **Meditation:** This really does work. If you've never tried it before, attempt it for just five minutes. Sit in a comfortable position, preferably on the floor with your legs crossed. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. When your worrisome thoughts begin to intrude, gently turn your focus to your breathing again. If your brain starts to make you feel anxious for not focusing on your fears (and it probably will), acknowledge your anxiety, but try to observe it from an outside perspective, such as, *"Yes, I can feel you, but you're not a part of the true me."*
- **Yoga poses:** Do two or three poses just before getting into bed. Child's Pose and Cat-Cow Pose, for example, are two very simple positions designed to relax your mind and body and also stretch your back, neck, and shoulders (where we hold most of our tension). Child's Pose is so named because it is the position children will intuitively go into when feeling overwhelmed, reminiscent of the fetal position.
- **Mindful observation:** Choose a natural object on which to focus. It can be a leaf, the moon, a feather, etc. For one minute, focus on this object and fully take it in. Observe every aspect of its beauty and purpose in the world. If your mind tries to go back to your worries, gently bring it back to your chosen object of beauty.



- **Gratitude:** This is one of the easiest, fastest ways to let go of negativity. Whenever you find yourself dwelling on an unnecessary negative thought, match it with a positive thought. Start a habit of giving thanks for the things in your life that you would sorely miss if they were gone tomorrow.

Retraining your thoughts to be productive, rather than destructive, takes some practice, but it can be done. Before getting into bed each night, be aware of where your attention is heading. If your thoughts were food, would they be healthy or toxic to your body? Continue to feed your mind and body nourishing thoughts, and a restful night of sleep will come. **S&H**

## MORE IDEAS FOR MANAGING STRESS

### TRY MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

This type of physical therapy—conducted by professionals such as sports-medicine experts, massage therapists, and chiropractors—involves intense pressure on an area, followed by letting the muscles and fascia release. A study on the technique, which used blood cortisol levels to gauge response, found it more effective at reducing physical stress than taking a nap. You

can learn to do self-myofascial release at home, using foam rollers or tennis balls.

### COMMUTE THROUGH NATURE

Heading through a natural environment leads to better mental health, reports a 2018 study by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health. See if you can reroute your daily commute so that you'll pass through a park, under a canopy of trees,

or past a nature reserve or forest. Even better: Bike or walk if you can.

### CUDDLE OR HAVE SEX

Both boost chemicals in the body, like oxytocin, which reduce stress and boost mood, report researchers from the University of North Carolina and the University of Pittsburgh. Sex also flexes the pelvis, which is key for stress release.

—KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER

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# Yoga for Better Sleep

BY JULIE PETERS

I'VE STRUGGLED WITH INSOMNIA for most of my life, and while exercise, bedtime routines, and diet adjustments have helped, I still have the occasional night wondering why the heck I'm not sleeping. We can experience insomnia if we are worried; our primitive brains think we need to be on guard for predators and won't let us relax into the dangerous zone of unconsciousness.

While we can't simply turn off stress, we can send signals to the body and brain that we are safe right now. Check out this simple, restorative yoga practice you can do under the covers with two or three pillows when sweet unconsciousness eludes you. It follows the advice my mom used to give me as an insomniac child: "It doesn't matter whether you are sleeping, as long as you are resting."

Resting in your parasympathetic nervous system (the rest and digest system) can be more restorative than sleep if, like me, sleep sometimes means bad dreams and teeth grinding. This is a practice of conscious rest, and if you do happen to drift off, that sleep will be rich and restful.

The most important tool for this practice is relaxed belly breath. Focus on the belly softly expanding as you inhale and releasing as you exhale. Focusing on sensation can help you switch into the present moment in your body. Even if there is a specific issue keeping you up, focus on what it feels like in your body, not what you should do about it. The second key is to move slowly. Jumping up to yank your blanket around will send the signal to your brain that you are under stress again and need to be alert.

## RECLINED BACKBEND

From sitting, place one pillow horizontally behind you and lay back so that your hips stay on the bed and your shoulders dip off the top edge of the pillow. Your second



pillow supports your head. If you have a third pillow, place it under your knees. This pose opens the belly and creates space for the breath. It is excellent for back sleepers.

## SIDE LYING

From the reclined backbend, roll onto your right side so that one pillow is under your head and the other pillow supports the curve of your waist. Your right hip is on the bed, and your right shoulder dips into the space between the two pillows. Curl your knees in; a third pillow can support between your legs. This is an **excellent pose** for side sleepers who get neck pain, and laying on the right side is physiologically slightly more relaxing than laying on the left side. Switch sides whenever you like.

## SUPPORTED SLEEPING BABY

Lay on your belly. Slide your left knee up toward your armpit so that your shin rests on a pillow. Tuck the second pillow under the left side of your chest at a diagonal so that you can wrap your left arm around the pillow and rest the left side of your chest and your right cheek on it. Your right shoulder, arm, and hip are all still on the bed. This is a helpful pose for lower-back pain and is great for stomach sleepers. Switch sides whenever you like.

Happy resting! **S&H**



# The Dance of Sleep and Emotions

BY KALIA KELMENSEN

**MAYBE YOU'VE NOTICED** that everyone's in a bad mood on days that follow a lousy night's sleep. It could be that it's your sleep-deprived self that's more aware of grumpy people—and your own grumpiness isn't helping.

Not getting enough sleep affects your health in many ways. Your immune system takes a hit, blood pressure is affected, and weight gain is a common side effect. Another place you get off balance when you don't get enough sleep is your emotional health.

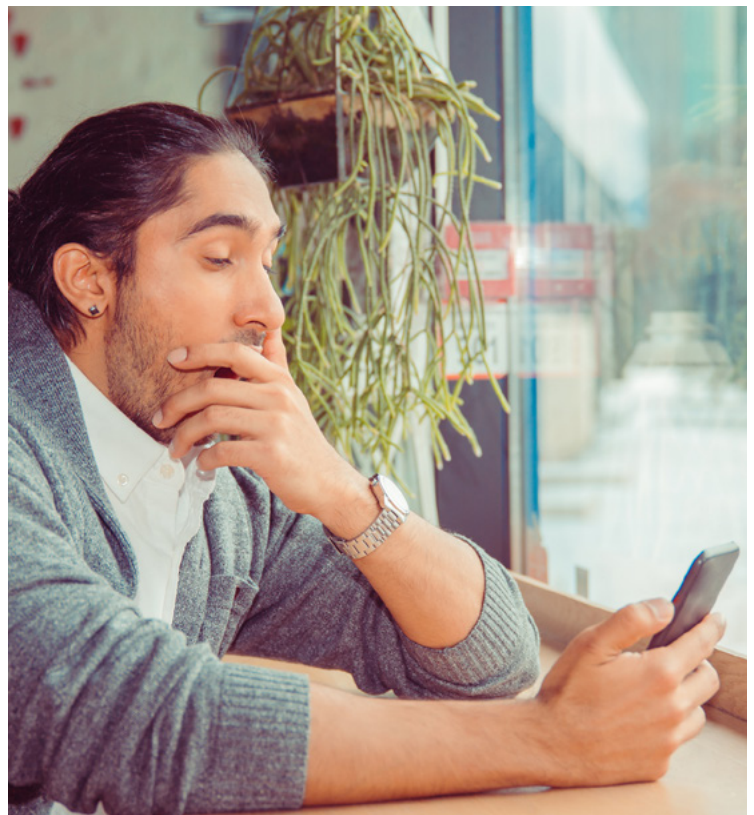
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Katharina Lederle, who has her PhD in human circadian physiology and behavior is a specialist in human sleep and fatigue. In her book *Sleep Sense: Improve Your Sleep, Improve Your Health*, Lederle describes the dance between your emotional wellbeing and the quality of your sleep.

- **Bad mood, bad attitude.** We all know that a night of not sleeping well makes negative emotions more available and noticeable than positive emotions—we are *grumpy*. According to Lederle, we have a harder time being aware of our own emotional state, and have a harder time interacting with other people in our life because we are less able to perceive their emotions and respond appropriately. We become less able to read facial expressions, and rather than responding to others with empathy, we are more likely to blame others for things going wrong. Losing sleep also makes us less able to control our impulses, which means we have more conflict in our day.
- **Motivation.** When poor sleep continues, we also lose our motivation. We lose our ability to think about what’s best for us in the long term, and instead choose the short win. Laying on the couch beats going for a walk, and we grab a bag of chips or fast food rather than cutting up a plate of veggies and cooking a healthy meal. It becomes a vicious cycle where our choices make us less likely to get a good night’s sleep, and our poor sleep increases the chances we will make poor choices. This cycle can lead to us feeling isolated and uninspired by our life.
- **Neutrality.** Our ability to focus is affected when we have poor sleep. Lederle writes, “This shift in attention can help regulate our emotions, because we purposely divert our attention from a negative emotional stimulus to something positive or neutral.” We also tend to focus more on negative emotions and circumstances when we are sleep deprived. One possible reason for this is that we effectively lose our ability to ignore information that doesn’t matter to us. That level that we get “set



off” emotionally speaking is quite low, so we are bothered by the smallest things.

- **Connections in the brain.** The amygdala is a structure in our brain that processes emotional input. As a “threat radar” it tends to view most input as dangerous. The structure in our brain that keeps track of the amygdala’s response is in our prefrontal cortex, where our executive functioning happens. Poor sleep weakens the important connection between these two structures. As Lederle writes, “The amygdala can now ‘run around like an unruly child’ and shout ‘danger, doom and gloom.’ We then react emotionally to everything around us, but can’t really respond appropriately.”

Lederle notes that sleep, especially REM sleep, that deep sleep that comes later in the sleep cycle, is “important for overnight processing and next-day regulation of emotions.” Knowing that getting a good, full night’s sleep is crucial for emotional health can help us shift our habits so that we create the space, and the habits that help us to get it. As Lederle suggests, “Perhaps one function of sleep is to provide us with some free therapy hours.” **S&H**



# How to Sleep Better in 15 Minutes ... the Norse Way

BY SARAH BOWEN

**THOSE OF US** who struggle to sleep have likely heard sleep experts' advice: Avoid caffeine after 4 pm. Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet. Shut off blue-light emitting TVs, phones, and computer screens at least an hour before bed (that hour may seem like an auspicious time to tackle bedside book piles, but, often, reading stimulates the brain, preventing us from melting into much-needed z's.)

The Norse practice of *útisetá* might be able to help us. Edward Sellner, professor emeritus of theology and spirituality at Saint Catherine University, describes *útisetá* as “the practice of sitting out under the moon and the stars to listen attentively to the voices of nature, to singing water and rustling leaves.”

Traditionally, the practice took place on sacred grave mounds or where roads crossed. This signified

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sitting at the crossroads between worlds. One would sit alone—sometimes wrapped “under a cloak”—hoping to receive a vision, wisdom, or inspiration. The sitting could last many hours or span overnight.

For our modern version, we’ll just start with 15 minutes at the crossroads between awake and sleepy.

- Start by turning off your devices and preparing your bedroom for sleep mode, including dimming all lights.
- Next, find somewhere outside where you can sit safely and quietly. (If you are building-bound, you can place a chair near an open window that has a view of the sky.)
- Tune into the flow of life force within yourself.
- Notice your breath. Follow it for a few cycles. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.
- Now tune into your surroundings. Connect through your senses one by one. Ask yourself: What do you notice around you? What appears in the sky above you? What do you smell? Hear? How does the ground feel? How does the air taste?
- Consider any beings around you. It’s said the Norse often sang along with the birds or nature spirits they felt were present. Try humming or vocalizing along gently to what you hear: The woot of a country barn owl, the chirping of city crickets, or the croaking of suburban frogs.
- Observe, but do not absorb. Let your thoughts roll by as if playing on a screen. Try not to attach to any opinions or judgments. For example, let’s say you hear a noise. An observation is: “I heard a car door slam.” Let go of any opinions (“I hate noise!”) or judgments (“My neighbor is an insensitive jerk.”) Learning the difference between observing and judging takes practice. Quick tip: If the thought qualifies for an emoji, just let it pass right by.
- If your mind wanders to thoughts of the past or future, gently pull it back to your surroundings. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.
- When you feel your practice is complete, transition slowly from sitting to standing. Carefully journey



to your bed (without checking any of your modern devices!).

- Once in your bed, softly close your eyes. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.
- Zzz.

Try repeating this practice each night for a week, or perhaps every Wednesday this month. Why Wednesday? That’s Odin’s day! Our English word evolved from *Wōdnesdæg*, literally *Wōdnes* (Odin’s) *dæg* (day). Through intention and practice, you might just end up with a sacred habit. In that spirit, I’m considering revising my copy of the *Hávamál*:

“The wise earthlings watch the stars at night, / letting thoughts pass by like clouds; / when morning comes, they are refreshed, / waking with inspiration for the new day.” **S&H**





# 6 Ways to Deal With Nighttime Anxiety

BY KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER

- 1 Repeat a mantra.** There is a mantra specifically for invoking sleep. Try repeating *Om Agasthi Shahina* (Om Ah-gah-stee Shah-ee-nah).
- 2 Try affirmations.** Instead of freaking out—or trying to force sleep into your life, which will backfire, gently steer your mind back to a calm state with affirmations such as, “I fall asleep easily and naturally.” Or, “I love to sleep and do so easily.”
- 3 Feng shui placements.** In order to sleep well, feng shui philosophy would be that you need to ensure the chi is flowing. Remove all clutter: paperwork, books, digital devices. Cover computer monitors with a dark cloth. Dana Claudat of the blog *The Tao of Dana* notes that any lighting such as chandeliers should not be hanging directly over the bed, and that some people find they sleep better if they remove stored items from under their bed. Yep, that “baggage” on your mind can be literal.
- 4 Aromatherapy.** Lavender and bitter orange both improved the quality of sleep in studies, according to a 2017 published review in the *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Science* called “Effectiveness of Aromatherapy in Insomnia.” The trick is to have essential oils ready, so that when the monkey brain starts pinging around at 3 am, you’re not stumbling in the bathroom looking for your bottle of lavender. Keep a bottle of aromatherapy spray near the bed to spritz the pillow or linens. In times of severe restlessness, set up a diffuser before retiring for the night so it’s ready to go, and when the brain starts churning, flip on the fragrant mist. Ahh.
- 5 Life management.** Don’t give an anxious mind any more fodder. Avoid stressful tasks and topics right before bed, such as paying bills, going over the household budget with your partner, booking a multi-leg flight, dealing with your mother-in-law, etc. Create a buffer zone prior to sleeping that is dedicated to relaxing activities such as a hot bath, reading a good book or meditating.
- 6 What’s in the cabinet?** An imbalance—either too much or too little—of some vitamins, such as D and B, can cause sleep quality to erode. Check with your healthcare provider to ensure you’re getting the right levels, especially if you have started taking a new medication or supplement. **S&H**





# Deep Sleep Tonic

BY LAURA PLUMB

**AN AYURVEDIC FIX** for a better night's sleep—great for calming *vata*, or any flighty, fractured, anxious, can't-settle-down sort of energy.

What we all need to calm *vata* is more *ojas*. *Ojas* is the ayurvedic word for deep nourishment, our underlying reserves of energy. *Ojas* gives patience, contentment, longevity, stamina, strength, and stability. It's lubricating, grounding, and is said to live in the heart.

So how do we boost our *ojas*? It comes from wholesome well-digested foods and rejuvenating rest. In the autumn, when *vata* dominates, *ojas* is available to us through seasonal foods like root vegetables, grains, ghee, nuts and seeds, dates, raisins, and sweet fruits. Above all, *ojas* arises from deep sleep, where healthy digested foods are metabolized into strong tissue and balanced energy.

**If you could use a little help sleeping, try this simple Deep Sleep Tonic.** Resoundingly delicious and potent, it is great for calming *vata*, or any flighty, fractured, anxious, can't-settle-down sort of energy. Enjoy this deep sleep tonic (it serves two) an hour before bed for a night of sweet dreams and deep slumber.

## INGREDIENTS *(makes 2 servings)*

- 2 cups milk
- 2 medjool dates, pitted
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg, freshly grated

## INSTRUCTIONS

Wear an apron—turmeric stains! Put the dates in a blender with half a cup of water. Blend until the dates are completely liquefied. Pour into a saucepan with the milk, turmeric and nutmeg. Whisk the milk gently while bringing to a gentle boil. Serve and drink warm. You can make it vegan by replacing the dairy with homemade coconut, almond or rice milk; and a teaspoon of coconut oil.

- **For *vata*:** Stir in a hearty pinch of ginger and a dash of cardamom.
- **For *pitta*:** Double the quantity of turmeric.
- **For *kapha*:** Add generous pinches of cinnamon and black pepper. **S&H**

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# 5 Cures for Insomnia You Haven't Tried Yet

BY KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER

**MY HUSBAND AND I** once saw a coffee shop called *Insomnia* that, oddly, closed at 4 pm. If only it were so easy to knock out for the 60 million Americans who suffer from this sleep disorder.

You may have tried lowering your thermostat. You may have tried avoiding caffeine after 1 pm. Or darker blinds. Or cherry juice. No dice?

## HERE ARE FIVE NEW WAYS TO MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR PILLOW.

**1 Light a candle.** You've heard about cutting down on screen time before bed, as the blue light from cellphones and computer screens can interrupt your body's production of melatonin. Well, light a candle and read by candlelight. The glow has amber light, which is good for melatonin production—and is so cozy and Benjamin Franklin-like. For this new ritual, use beeswax candles to avoid toxic ingredients, and always extinguish the candle before you go to sleep or leave the room.

**2 Binaural beat beanie.** The **Sleep Shepherd** is a pretty cool gadget. It looks like what you'd wear to warm your ears when skiing, but combines EEG brain wave monitoring with a biofeedback system. It plays two tones in each ear to gradually lower your brain rate into a slower speed conducive to sleep.

**3 Fibonacci Sequence.** Why count sheep when you can create beautiful spirals of mathematics? The Fibonacci Sequence is the work of the medieval Italian mathematician Leonardo Pisano, and goes like this: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, and on and on. The next number is determined by adding up the two numbers that precede it.

**4 Separate bed ... rooms.** According to *Elle Decor*, a big trend in luxury housing is separate master bedrooms. The mag reported that nearly 1 out of 3 people seeking homes priced \$2 million or more have expressed interest in that particular layout. Sleeping alone, let's face it, leads to sounder rest for many people—no matter how happily coupled they are. So which way to the East Wing, darling?

**5 Sesame oil massage.** In Tibetan medicine, insomnia is associated with an imbalance of *rlung*, which translates to wind and is a similar concept to a qi; it's one of the main humors of the body. Too much thinking and mental overstimulation, can lead to this imbalance, according to the Tibetan healing arts blog's Anasuya Weil. The cure? Hot baths and a massage with oil, especially on the soles of the feet, the palms, and the top of the head at the crown chakra. **S&H**



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# A Purpose-Driven Life Leads to Better Sleep

BY KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER

**KNOWING YOU HAVE** a good reason to rise and shine—whether that’s because you need to walk a cute dog, take care of a loved one, or work on a project—means you’ll sleep better at night. And sleep better in very specific ways, meaning less sleep apnea and restless leg syndrome.

This discovery is the result of a **study** from Northwestern Medicine and Rush University Medical Center, which polled 823 participants who were 60 to 100 years old. Researchers focused on older people for this data collection because, as humans age, we tend to have more disturbances in sleep, troubled by things such as restless leg syndrome and insomnia. The American College of Physicians now recommends nondrug interventions as a first-line defense for

treating **insomnia**, as opposed to popping a sleeping pill, so understanding how to help people sleep better, more naturally, is an important area of research.

Study participants answered a 10-question survey on how they felt about their life’s purpose and a 32-page survey on sleep. Once the numbers were crunched, the results showed that people who felt their lives had meaning were 63 percent less likely to have sleep apnea and 52 percent less likely to have restless leg syndrome.

“Helping people cultivate a purpose in life could be an effective drug-free strategy to improve sleep quality, particularly for a population that is facing more insomnia,” wrote the study’s senior author, Jason Ong. “Purpose in life is something that can be cultivated and enhanced through mindfulness therapies.” **S&H**

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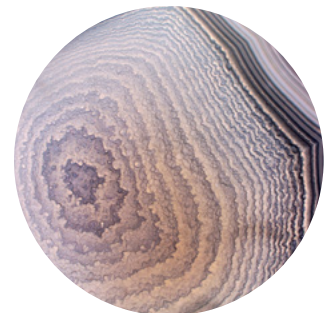


# 6 Crystals to Help You Sleep

BY HEATHER ASKINOSIE

**IN MY 25 YEARS** of working with crystals, I've narrowed the list of my favorite crystals for sleep down to just six. Each of these six crystals can help you get deeper sleep in a variety of ways. It's important to first identify what the main obstacle to sound sleep is for you, and from there you can find the ideal crystal to help you overcome that obstacle and get a good night's rest.

**I** **Agate** has a grounding energy that helps you find stability and balance. When you feel pulled in all different directions or feel like you haven't had a moment to pause all day, agate roots you in the present moment and encourages you to give yourself permission to slow down in time for sleep. *Place agate underneath your pillow.*



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**2** **Amethyst** brings peace to your mind, body, and spirit, and helps you release tensions before bed. It brings about a spa-like feeling of pure relaxation and serenity, allowing you to find rest when your head hits the pillow. *Place amethyst on your nightstand.*



**3** **Celestite** is known for protecting against nightmares or other worried thoughts that can keep you up at night. It calms your mind and helps you put your to-do list and any future-tripping on the back burner until tomorrow. *Place celestite on the windowsill.*



**4** **Labradorite** expands your mind and connects you to your dream state. When you dream, you can tap into your subconscious mind and uncover answers and experience realizations that can help resolve unanswered questions in your daily life. *Place labradorite on your nightstand.*



**5** **Selenite** is one of the highest vibration crystals, and its high frequency helps to purify and cleanse your spirit and your space. It eliminates any energetic grime in your bedroom and in your mind and body, allowing you to settle in without holding onto any heavier energies from the day. *Place selenite underneath your bed.*



**6** **Lepidolite** naturally contains mica and lithium, which are known to help manage anxiety and stress. By helping you find relief from anxiety and stress, you can experience deeper sleep and give your mind a break from feeling overwhelmed. *Place lepidolite on your nightstand.*



**Combining Crystal Placement:** I recommend starting out with just one crystal to see what kind of an effect it has on your sleep. If, however, you're interested in working with a combination of crystals, you can place your crystals in the following way:

**amethyst and labradorite** on your nightstand, with **selenite** underneath your bed.

If you try this combination and notice that you feel alert or energized, remove some or all of the crystals from your bedroom. Crystals are amplifiers, which means they can amplify and magnify the energy in your room. Too many crystals can actually keep you up at night. You can try slowly adding the crystals back in one at a time until you find the right number and combination of crystals for you. **S&H**

**It's important to first identify what the main obstacle to sound sleep is for you, and from there you can find the ideal crystal to help you overcome that obstacle and get a good night's rest.**

# 11 Affirmations for Sweet Slumber

BY KALIA KELMENSON

**BING!** It's 2 am and you're awake—again—for **no apparent reason**. A few tosses and turns later, and your mind is galloping off to some distant horizon.

Try these 11 sleep affirmations to rein in your thoughts and return to rest.

1 I ground myself with the calming energy of the earth.

2 My thoughts pass like clouds in the sky.

3 Sleep returns to me easily.

4 I gently slip back into dreamland.

5 This problem can be better examined in the light of day.

6 The endless night sky embraces me.

7 My body relaxes effortlessly on the bed.

8 I release all tension easily, starting with my toes.

9 Though my mind is spinning, I can rest in the stillness of my being.

10 Daylight will bring clarity to this subject.

11 I place these thoughts at the feet of my dreams. **S&H**



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# After Sleep, Wake Gently

BY CELIA ALARIO

In his game-changing book *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, Greg McKeown speaks about cultivating the “wisdom to sleep.” Yes, the *wisdom*.

I appreciate that concept, especially in the face of so much foolish pressure I’ve seen in activist circles to sacrifice sleep in order to push on and “get the job done.” Incidentally, the wisdom to sleep, with space to think, time to look and listen, permission to play, and discipline to apply highly selective criteria in making choices, comprise McKeown’s pillars for becoming an essentialist. “By applying a more selective criteria for what is essential,” says McKeown, “the pursuit of less allows us to regain control of our own choices so we can channel our time, energy, and effort into making the highest possible contribution toward the goals and activities that matter.”

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## For the kinesthetically inclined, imagine instead of being shaken awake or having the covers pulled off you, waking each morning to a gentle, loving touch on your arm or forehead.

I've realized lately that it's not just about getting enough sleep, but also about how we move out of sleep and into our day. So I hope you'll join me in building hype and momentum for an essential and burgeoning movement in favor of waking up gently. I know that by waking up gently, we can cultivate more joy and peace, reduce anxiety, and have more energy to make that essential contribution toward what really matters.

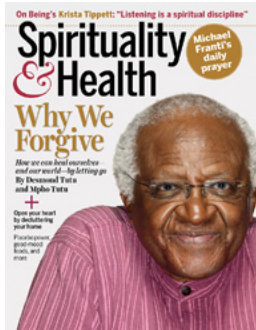
Imagine waking to the sound of birds or laughter slowly increasing in volume. Yes, there's **an app** for that. Or waking up after a dream cycle has completed, rather than being jarred awake while in the middle of one. Yep, there's **an app** for that too. Or how about waking to the sound of someone softly and playfully singing your name? I experienced this gift from the wakeup team at a Youth for Environmental Sanity (YES!) retreat a number of years back. Rather than walking amongst our cabins banging on pots and pans, they serenaded

us with a soothing tune, calling us awake lovingly and by name. Activists at the retreat mentioned the wakeup as a highlight of the event, and many said they awoke crying tears of joy!

For the kinesthetically inclined, imagine instead of being shaken awake or having the covers pulled off you, waking each morning to a gentle, loving touch on your arm or forehead. And for those with teenagers who seem nearly impossible to rouse, what might it be like if they woke up to an experience of your compassion and patience, rather than your irritation and resentment?

Long before science confirmed it, many of us knew that getting more sleep was critical for our wellbeing, yet we waited for the experts to confirm it in order to give ourselves permission to rest. It's time we all experiment with waking up gently and prove to ourselves and the world that this can make a difference in our composure and in our ability to be in service. **S&H**





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