



# How to Sleep Better

12 Days to the Sleep You Deserve

Sleepline

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## Chapter 1: Ditch All Caffeine 12 Hours Before Bed

*“Coffee is a way of stealing time that should by rights belong to your older self.”* – Terry Pratchet

It can be a vicious circle: You're constantly fatigued throughout the day due to getting insufficient sleep, so you drink coffee throughout the day to stay alert. Then when it's time to go to bed your mind is racing and you can't fall asleep, resulting in more daytime fatigue tomorrow.

If this cycle sounds familiar then you owe it to yourself to break the habit by reducing your caffeine consumption. Did you know that caffeine still affects your body **12 hours** after drinking it? That means that the afternoon cup of coffee you drink at 1pm is *still* in your system at 1am when you are (or should be) sound asleep.

Caffeine has been called the most popular drug in the world. This ubiquitous substance is found in over 60 plants and has been added to products that are hard to avoid no matter how hard you try. You can hardly leave your house without seeing at least one person (most likely several people) consuming coffee, tea, chocolate, soda, or one of the many other substances that have either naturally-occurring or artificially-added caffeine.

Dunkin' Donuts used to have a slogan: *The world runs on Dunkin'*. This may go down in history as being one of the most accurate corporate marketing campaigns in history, considering the fact that 90% of American adults consume caffeine on a daily basis. That statistic is shocking until you realize that the US is far from leading the way in caffeine consumption. Finland and other Scandinavian countries lead the world in caffeine consumption, primarily in the form of coffee.

Caffeine is a naturally occurring chemical stimulant that is officially known as trimethylxanthine (chemical formula  $C_8H_{10}N_4O_2$ ). Although we may not think of it as being a drug, it most definitely is. It actually shares many traits with more notorious - and destructive - drugs like amphetamines, heroin, and cocaine. Caffeine uses some of the same biochemical mechanisms as these other drugs to help stimulate your brain function.

When it's distilled down to its purest form, caffeine is a white powdery substance with a bitter taste. It has limited medical utility as a mild diuretic and heart stimulant that can help flush fluid out of your body.

While it does have limited medical usage, the most common reason people consume caffeine is for that sweet energy boost. It's been an important part of our global culture for hundreds of years. It was first consumed for energy-enhancing purposes in Africa around 800 A.D. According to accounts from Europe and Asia, coffee and tea became local staples around 1400.

We've come a long way from the early days of caffeine consumption. Our fast-paced modern culture is fueled by heavy coffee consumption. Many people can't even imagine starting their day without brewing up a pot of coffee. Students pop caffeine pills to stay alert during lectures and exams, office workers swing by the Starbucks drive-through on their way to the

office, and Red Bulls keep us awake on long road trips. Our society quite literally couldn't function without the energy enhancing properties of caffeine.

Like all good things, caffeine has a bad side.

Low to moderate doses of caffeine are completely safe - although addictive - and can actually give you health benefits. If you consume it excess it can cause problems:

- Increased anxiety
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Elevated blood sugar levels

Excessive caffeine consumption can create a vicious circle: you drink coffee to deal with your daytime fatigue, which disrupts your sleep cycles thus making you more tired, leading you to drink even more coffee to deal with even more daytime fatigue. It's a cycle that many of us in the industrialized world are familiar with and many of us can't imagine living without a brewing pot of coffee as the background track to life.

Since you're reading this book, you know that caffeine can cause serious problems with your sleep. Caffeine's half-life (the amount of time it takes for the quantity of a substance to be reduced to half the original amount) is five hours. If you consume 20 mg of tea at 5pm, at 10pm you'll still have 10mg in your system. A lot of people don't connect the pot of coffee they chugged to get through that last dreary hour of workday with their onset insomnia (inability to fall asleep), but the link between the two is clear: the caffeine you consume during the day can cause serious sleep disturbances.

## How to cut back

1. **Account for all sources of caffeine** - Sure there's the obvious culprits: coffee, tea, and soda. But caffeine is an insidious substance that can be found in foods and beverages you would never expect. Did you know that chocolate has caffeine? A one ounce serving of 70% cacao dark chocolate has 25mg of caffeine? We all know that energy drinks have caffeine, but they aren't legally required to tell you how much. If you're chugging Monsters, the first step you should take is replacing them with coffee or tea so you can accurately track your caffeine intake before cutting back. Gum and over-the-counter medication are other common places where caffeine hides. Account for all of it.
2. **Gradually cut back** - Once you realize that you have a problem with caffeine you'll be tempted to drop it cold turkey. Some people might have success with this method but you're most likely not one of them. Failing at the cold turkey approach doesn't make you weak, it makes you human. Caffeine withdrawal is a real phenomenon and can cause a



pounding headache, irritability, fatigue, and an inability to concentrate. It makes your life miserable and it makes you miserable to be around. Drink one less cup of coffee per day until you get to your target level of caffeine intake. You can also switch to decaf - which contains about half the amount of caffeine as the full-strength stuff - so you still get the tactile feel of drinking coffee but with a significantly reduced amount of caffeine. If you taper down correctly you won't even notice any withdrawal symptoms.

- 3. Create a defined cut-off time** - Since the half-life of caffeine is so long, it's important that you only drink it earlier in the day so your body has time to naturally get tired and fall asleep without the influence of this stimulant. If you normally drink coffee late in the afternoon, set a timer that's at least one hour before you would normally drink your last cup. If you normally stop drinking coffee at 6pm, set a timer for 5pm. When the timer goes off, that means that your coffee time is over. One week later move the timer up to 4pm, then 3pm and so on. You'll eventually go back to drinking coffee only in the morning like a normal person (you remember what that feels like, right?).

These three simple steps are the easiest way to cut back on your caffeine consumption. At Sleepline we recognize that caffeine is the biggest reason why people in modern societies have such a hard time falling asleep. Drinking coffee is ingrained in our culture to the point that people will even make fun of you for abstaining. Ignore the naysayers and cut back to get the sleep you need so you can function at your optimal level of performance and feel better.

**Learn More:** [How to Cope With Your Daily Coffee Habit](#), from Sleepline.com

## Chapter 2: Quit Alcohol Completely (Or at Least Stop Drinking Five Hours Before Sleep)

*"It provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance"* - William Shakespeare

Now that you've successfully eliminated caffeine from your diet, it's time to move on to the next substance that is keeping you up at night: alcohol.

Alcohol is one of the worst things you can consume if you want to get a good night of sleep. It might be hard to believe, given that pop culture views the addictive substance as a sleep aid. How many people do you know who like to drink a "nightcap" before bed? It turns out that, while it may seem like it's helping you "knock out", alcohol is actually destroying your body's ability to stay asleep throughout the night and your ability to go through all of the sleep cycles.

There have been 27 separate scientific studies (as of this writing) that prove that alcohol is terrible for your sleep. According to the studies, alcohol does help you fall asleep quicker but reduces rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, which is one of the most important stages in your sleep cycle. There are more pronounced negative effects if you consume a larger quantity of the substance.

REM sleep occurs about 90 minutes after you fall asleep. This is the time when you dream and is responsible for the restorative effects of sleep. When alcohol disrupts your REM sleep you'll experience daytime drowsiness, poor concentration, and reduced cognitive ability.

Alcohol is a sneaky substance. It may seem like it's actually improving your sleep since it's proven that it actually *can* help you fall asleep faster. The problems occur later. The benefits of falling asleep faster are outweighed by the negative effects that you experience during the second half of your night.

Scottsdale, AZ sleep specialist Dr. Michael Braus, writing in an article published on WebMD, claims that you're making a mistake if you use alcohol as a sleep aid because it can increase the chances of experiencing sleep disorders.

"Alcohol is not an appropriate sleep aid. If you rely on alcohol to fall asleep, recognize that you have a greater likelihood to sleepwalk, sleep talk, and have problems with your memory," Braus emphatically stated.

Alcohol is also highly effective at suppressing melatonin, the hormone that your body releases at nighttime when it's time to go to bed. Consuming alcohol has a direct negative effect on your circadian rhythm - the system that is closely tied to the day-night cycle and what your body uses to let you know when it's time to go to sleep.

There's strong evidence that alcohol also affects your internal sleep drive. Adenosine is a chemical that builds up in your body the longer you stay awake, and when it reaches a critical level you get tired and fall asleep. The adenosine-boosting effects of alcohol mean that you'll stay awake during the times when you fall asleep and can throw your natural sleep-wake cycle out of whack.

**Learn More:** [Alcohol Consumption and Sleep](#), from [Sleepline.com](#)

## Chapter 3: Maintain a Regular Sleep-Wake Cycle

*"A schedule defends from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time."* – Annie Dillard

Going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day is one of the best ways to get high-quality sleep. The timing of your sleep is just as important as the duration. You'll feel more refreshed if you sleep six hours but wake up at your normal bedtime than you would if you woke up a couple hours later even though you slept a full eight hours.



## How to choose a bedtime

It's important to choose a bedtime that syncs up with the time you naturally start feeling sleepy. If you notice that you start yawning and you feel your eyes getting heavy around 9PM, then that's when you should head to bed.

Once you set your bedtime it's critical that you stick to it. Go to bed at that exact same time every single day, even if you don't feel tired. Deviating from your sleep cycle by even one hour can adversely affect your circadian rhythm.

If you have a sleep debt that you need to repay, it's better to take a short nap during the day and then wake up and go about your day then it is to go to bed an hour earlier.

Our bodies simply perform better when we do the same things at the same time every day. Your body undergoes a 24-hour cycle known as the circadian rhythm. Your sleep-wake cycle is one of the biggest components of your circadian rhythm, and as such is one of the biggest influences on your quality of life.

## What to do if you don't feel tired at bedtime

We all know the feeling: you look at the clock and see that it's time to go to bed, but you're simply not tired. You're tempted to stay up an additional hour and watch yet another episode or play just one more match, but you know the importance of your circadian rhythm and you're determined to go to bed at the same time every day. How do you make yourself tired?

There are a few things you can do to induce sleepiness.

- 1) **Time your carb intake so you consume more in the evening.** Also known as "inducing a food coma". Timing your carb intake so that you eat them during the evening will make you more sleepy. Be careful about eating too heavy of a meal right before bedtime, however, since that can actually harm your sleep quality.
- 2) **Do a routine task.** If you're \*really not tired\* then doing a boring, routine task to keep your mind occupied can make you feel more sleepy. Things like rearranging books and cleaning can help quiet your internal chatter and help make you more sleepy.
- 3) **Take melatonin.** Taking a melatonin supplement an hour before bedtime can help make you more tired at the correct time.

Learn More: [The Four Stages of Sleep and Sleep Cycles](#), from Sleepline.com

## Chapter 4: Mentally Prepare Yourself for Sleep

*“I believe that people make their own luck by great preparation and good strategy.”* – Jack Canfield

Sleeping is as much a mental activity as it is a physical one. We can all relate to feeling like our thoughts are “going a million miles per minute”. That uncomfortable feeling of being unable to “shut your brain off” when all you desperately want is to go to sleep can be unbearable.

If you’re anything like me the thoughts that race through your head are typically related to unfinished tasks, important things that you need to do the following day, and ruminating about problems that occur in your life. The expression “it’s keeping me up at night” exists for a reason. If you have things that you haven’t resolved during the day, then it’s going to be virtually impossible for you to fall asleep at night.

The best way to solve this problem is to get the thoughts out of your head and onto a piece of paper. I recommend writing a list of everything that you need to accomplish the following day. It doesn’t matter how mundane the thought is. Write it down anyway. If the thought enters your mind before you go to bed, that’s a sign that it’s something that your mind will return to when you’re finally tucked in and ready to go to sleep. Write it down so it doesn’t linger and ruin your night.

Write down possible solutions to any problem that you’re ruminating about. If you have a problem at work, write the problem down and come up with three simple ways that you’ll solve that problem. You’ll notice that you’re ruminating a lot less at night (and during the day as well). You’ll fall asleep quicker and will stay asleep longer. Don’t go to sleep without writing down the solutions to any problems that you’re thinking about.

### **Breathing exercises: can they work?**

Breathing exercises are a great way to help your body relax before bed. Integrating these routines into your pre-sleep routine will dramatically improve the quality of your sleep.

Take slow deep breaths. Each breath should be deeper than the last. The best way to do this is to think of a place where you feel calm. That’s right, I’m telling you to go to your happy place. Once you can clearly visualize that place in your mind’s eye, start taking deep breaths.

The next step is to slowly relax your body. You might not notice it right away, but your body is likely tensing up when you try to go to sleep, especially if you’re feeling frustrated about your insomnia.

## **Other techniques to calm your mind**

Starting with your extremities - hands, feet, arms, and legs - tense up your muscles and slowly relax them. It can be helpful to work upwards, starting with your feet and moving up your body until you're completely relaxed.

It's also important to come up with a pre-sleep routine and stick with it. Once your body knows that you always go to bed after doing something, you'll be conditioned to fall asleep after your routine is complete. A good example is taking a warm bath before bed. By doing so you'll relax your muscles due to the effects of the warm water but you'll also let your mind know that this is what you do before you go to sleep. Your body will begin winding down for bed since that's what it is accustomed to. Incorporating a routine that you do every single night is a great way to prepare your mind and body for a night of great sleep.

Soft music and light stretching can also help. Anything that isn't too stimulating will help relax your mind and reduce the amount of thoughts that are swirling around in there at any given moment. A calm - and well-rested - mind is a happy mind.

## **Chapter 5: Get Proper Exercise**

*"A healthy body owns a healthy mind."* - Amit Kalantri

Research has conclusively shown that working out is one of the most important things you can do for your overall health. A regular exercise routine has astounding benefits for your entire body and can dramatically improve your quality of life.

Physical exercise is also linked to your sleep cycle. Vigorous physical activity can help you feel more energized during the day when you have to be awake, thus reducing your dependency on caffeine to combat daytime sleepiness.

The time of day when you workout is extremely important if you're exercising to improve your sleep quality. At Sleepline we recommend that you time your workout so that it ends approximately four hours before your bedtime. This will allow you to fully relax and let your body naturally drift off to sleep.

There is a common misconception that you should workout as close to bedtime as possible so that you "tire yourself out". Unfortunately this is wrong. If you exercise and immediately try to fall asleep you may still have too much adrenaline coursing through your system. Your heart rate may still be high. Your body is still in "exercise mode". Your body thinks it still has to be "on" when your mind is telling you it wants to shut off. This can lead to increased insomnia and other sleeping difficulties.

## How to exercise when you have no time

There are a few simple exercises that anyone can incorporate into their daily routine. I don't care how busy you are, there are always ways to get your heart rate up and burn calories.

Try these techniques:

- 1) **Skip the elevator.** Take the stairs the next time you show up to the office instead of riding the elevator like everyone else. This is a quick and easy way to be a little less sedentary and usually doesn't require any extra time (I notice I get to my destination quicker without having to wait for the elevator to arrive and waiting for everyone to get off on every floor).
- 2) **Body-weight squats.** You can do these anywhere. The only downside is that people will definitely think that you're weird, so you may want to wait until no one's looking. If you work in your own private office then getting up and doing a few squats is no big deal. If you're in an open office plan, try sneaking into the bathroom stall to do a few squats. It seems weird but literally no one will know and you'll still get some of the benefits of exercising.
- 3) **Walk during your breaks.** Walk to lunch instead of driving your car. If you bring your own lunch, try eating it and then going for a walk around your office building. You're already sitting in a chair for the other seven hours of your day, do you really want to be sitting during your lunch break as well?

None of these tips are going to turn you into an athlete. If you're living a remarkably sedentary life, then these techniques will definitely help improve your sleep. It doesn't have to be a full workout at a gym to count as exercise.

The little things you do every single day start to add up. Are you the type of person who rides an elevator or gets on an escalator and just stands there? Or are you the type who takes the stairs? Would you rather drive your SUV to McDonald's or eat a home-cooked meal and go for a walk? What you do every single day affects your overall health and your sleep.

## Chapter 6: Control When and What You're Eating

*"To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art."* – Francois de la Rochefoucauld

If there's one aspect of health that we are neglecting the most as a society, it's diet. Most people in American culture view food as fulfilling two roles: 1) filling up your stomach and 2) tasting good. That's it. Any conception of using food for performance or health reasons is outside of the mainstream in our society.

Eating a poor diet doesn't just lead to obesity, heart disease, depression, diabetes, cancer, and other diseases. It also hurts your ability to sleep well. A well-rounded, healthy diet that avoids excessive carbohydrate and sugar intake is ideal.

Timing your meals is also extremely important. We recommend avoiding all food 3 hours before bedtime. If you notice that you're waking up during the night to go to the bathroom then you should cease drinking water 2 hours before bedtime. More specifically, you *really* need to avoid eating rich, heavy foods close to bedtime. Foods like cheeseburgers, curry, and dark chocolate are examples of what you should be avoiding. These foods are hard for your body to digest. When your body is focused on digesting food it's not focused on sleep.

Foods that are rich in fat can also lead to heartburn. Fatty foods cause your stomach to overproduce acid, which can build up and flow into your esophagus. This can cause heartburn which makes it *extremely* difficult to fall asleep.

Spicy foods stimulate your body and keep you awake. If you're about to go to bed soon then it's important to avoid foods that are going to keep you up and you should focus on eating items that will relax you instead.

### **Foods you should eat**

Now that you know what you should avoid, let's take a look at what you *should* eat:

- **Bananas** - This fruit is packed with magnesium, which helps relax your muscles and helps you fall asleep easier. They also contain sleep-promoting chemicals like serotonin and melatonin.
- **Honey** - Contains melatonin. Taking one teaspoon before bed can help regulate your sleep-wake cycle. It also suppresses orexin, a chemical that causes wakefulness.
- **Sweet potatoes** - These root vegetables provide large amounts of the muscle relaxant potassium. The complex carbohydrates in sweet potatoes also help promote sleepiness.

Other foods that are rich in the nutrients that help you sleep better include:

- Papaya
- Lima beans
- Peas
- Mushrooms
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Tart cherry juice

Learn More: [Food, Diet, and Sleep - What You Eat Matters](#), from [Sleepline.com](#)

## Chapter 7: Control Your Bedroom Temperature

*“It doesn’t matter what temperature the room is, it’s always room temperature.”* – Steven Wright

The first six chapters of this book have focused on what you can do to optimize your own personal health for sleep. We’ve covered the benefits of eliminating caffeine, the negative effects of alcohol, why you should maintain a regular sleep schedule, how to mentally prepare yourself for sleep, why an exercise routine helps you sleep, and the effects of your diet. Now we’ll move on to the second most important aspect of sleep hygiene: how to optimize your sleeping environment.

The most important thing you need to realize when you’re setting up your sleeping environment is that temperature is extremely important. Keeping yourself cool will help you sleep better. The ideal room temperature for sleep is between 60 and 67 degrees Fahrenheit.

Clearly the first step in making your sleeping environment cooler is to adjust your thermostat. If you have a smart thermostat you can program it to reduce your home’s temperature at your bedtime and to increase when you wake up in the morning. If you have an old-school thermostat you’ll have to adjust the temperature manually before you go to sleep.

Lowering the temperature of your room is critical because it triggers a few evolutionary cues that your body uses to determine when it’s time to go to sleep. The first one is light. Once the sun goes down and everything gets dark your body starts producing melatonin in preparation for sleep.

The second one is temperature. Once the sun goes down the outdoor temperature declines with it. The problem with our modern lifestyle is that we’re indoors for the majority of the time and thus we aren’t exposed to these temperature fluctuations. If you have your thermostat set to a comfortable 74 degrees 24/7, then your body will have a hard time determining whether it’s day or night. This makes it much harder for you to drift off to sleep no matter how tired you are.

If you don’t have air conditioning or you’re looking for a cheaper alternative to cool your room, consider using a fan. Instead of pointing the fan directly at yourself, you should crack open your window and point the fan in its direction. The fan will push the hot air out of your room and make your sleeping environment cooler.

Some people like to put a bowl of ice in front of their fan. This creates a stream of cold air that replicates the effects of air conditioning.



You should also choose your bedding with care. Materials like cotton and Tencel are much more breathable alternatives to other common fabrics. Satin and silk sheets may look luxurious and fancy, but those materials trap heat and are unsuitable for use in the summer. Cotton and Tencel are breathable materials that promote air circulation.

If you sleep while wearing clothes, make sure that they are loose and breathable. Just like with your bedding, you'll want to wear clothes that are made out of cotton since air can flow through them easier than other materials.

**Learn More:** [How Temperature Affects Your Sleep Time](#), from [Sleepline.com](#)

## Chapter 8: Take a Second Look at Your Sleeping Environment

*“Quiet is peace. Tranquility. Quiet is turning down the volume knob on life. Silence is pushing the off button. Shutting it down. All of it.” – Khaled Hosseini*

Your body naturally sleeps better when you're in a tranquil environment. That means that you need to completely optimize your sleeping environment so that it's conducive to getting a good night of rest.

The first step is to make sure that you're sleeping in a quiet room. If your sleep is constantly interrupted by noise then the other steps you take to get a good night of sleep are going to be pointless. Peace and quiet is absolutely critical.

You might be surprised to learn that the best way to keep your room quiet is to install blackout shades. Even though their primary purpose is to keep out light, they pull double duty by also blocking sound. If you live on a busy street or have loud neighbors, thick blackout curtains can reduce the amount of sound that comes through your window.

If the noise situation in your bedroom is bad enough you can install soundproofing materials as well. You can find soundproofing materials at your local hardware store. It's relatively inexpensive and easy to install, so it's a no-brainer if you want to get a good night of high-quality sleep.

White noise machines are the ultimate solution for blocking out unwanted sounds. They have multiple settings that play a soothing white noise that helps drown out disruptive noises. Many people find the sounds relaxing and find that sleeping with white noise playing is even easier than sleeping in total silence.

If a white noise machine is too expensive you can opt for a pair of cheap earplugs instead. Foam earplugs expand in your ear canal and block out virtually all outside noises. The only

problem is that many people find that it's difficult to sleep with earplugs in, but if you can tolerate them they're one of the best ways to get some peace and quiet when all else fails.

Loud fans and soft music are other options if you don't feel like investing money into optimizing your sleeping environment. Fans and soft music serve a similar function as white noise machines in that they drown out undesirable sounds while emitting sounds that help you drift off to sleep.

**Learn More:** [Recommended White Noise Machines](#), from [Sleepline.com](#)

### **Keep your cell phone out of your bedroom**

We recommend that you physically remove your phone from your bedroom before you go to bed. The light and sound from your incoming notifications will distract you and keep you awake. If you're having difficulty falling asleep, it might be hard to resist the temptation to reach for your phone if it's on the nightstand right next to you; but if it's in the other room you won't be as likely to get up and get it.

Our phones are designed by some of the smartest people in the world for one express purpose: to keep you addicted and constantly checking your screen for new notifications. This fragmented and distracted state of mind makes it almost impossible to fall asleep. If you're laying in bed worrying about how many people like your most recent Instagram post or wondering whether there's any updates on that news story you just read then you'll never be able relax and "shut your mind off".

Do yourself a favor and keep your phone in a separate room. Any "emergencies" can wait until the morning.

### **Take an in-depth look at your mattress and pillows**

Your mattress and pillow(s) play a \*huge\* role in your ability to sleep better. Make sure that your bed is comfortable for you and lines up with your personal preferences. For example, even though you may have read articles that state that firm mattresses are better you should still opt for a soft mattress if you know for a fact that it meets your needs better.

In general, firm mattresses are best for back sleepers. This is because the firmness prevents you from sinking in too much. Your back will stay straight as a board throughout the night which can be a huge lifesaver if you suffer from lower back pain.

Soft mattresses are better for side sleepers. Sleeping on your side is more complicated compared to sleeping on your back because your body is no longer in a straight line. Your hips

and shoulders stick out from your sides and this can create uncomfortable pressure points if you're sleeping on a firm mattress. High-quality soft mattresses are designed to sink-in on the parts of your body that protrude while still providing support for the parts of your body that don't.

Medium mattresses are best for stomach sleepers or combination sleepers (people who switch between multiple sleeping positions throughout the night). They provide the benefits of a firm mattress along with the comfort associated with soft mattresses. Depending on how you look at it this could be a "best of both worlds" scenario or a "jack of all trades, master of none" type of situation.

It's best to try out a variety of different brands within the same firmness level when you shop for a mattress. Most mattress stores use a 10-point rating system with 10 being the firmest and 1 being the softest. Even though this might seem like a standardized system it's actually very subjective and there can be \*huge\* comfort differences even within mattresses from the same brand that have the same firmness rating.

If you know that you sleep hot then it's important to buy a mattress that cools you down and has adequate airflow. Memory foam mattresses trap heat and they are not ideal for hot sleepers. Coil mattresses are best since the metal coils naturally allow air to circulate throughout the bed. Latex mattresses are another great option for hot sleepers since the material doesn't trap nearly as much heat as their memory foam counterparts.

Buying sheets that are one size too big can also help increase airflow and cool you down when you sleep. Using bedding that snugly fits your mattress and body will trap heat and make you sweat more than you would using sheets and blankets with a looser fit.

**Sleepline Approved Product:** [Cultiver Linen Sheet Set](#), from Cultiver.com ([read review](#))

Hypoallergenic mattresses, sheets, pillows, and blankets are a must have if you suffer from allergies. Seasonal allergies are a massive problem that many people have. Your bedding can actually contribute to the problem by trapping dust mites, pollen, and other allergens. When you toss and turn at night you're absorbing all of those allergens and making your symptoms worse. Shopping for products that are specifically listed as "hypoallergenic" can make you more comfortable while you sleep and leave you feeling refreshed when you wake up rather than miserable.

The last thing you need to do is to make sure that you're only using your bed for sleeping and sex. You need to condition your mind and body to view your bedroom as the place you go to for sleep only. If you frequently lounge around in bed while reading or watching TV then your brain doesn't necessarily associate it with falling asleep. Then when you go to lay down at bedtime you'll notice that your mind is racing and it's impossible to fall asleep. No shit! Of course you're going to have difficulties "shutting your mind off" if you've just spent time playing Angry Birds in

bed instead of trying to fall asleep. Your body has no idea what you're trying to do and it'll be immensely difficult to fall asleep.

## Chapter 9: Try Supplements

*“My supplements are similar to my training – I always commit to being a better version of myself.” – Ronnie Coleman*

Now that you've optimized your external sleeping environment and eliminated any harmful habits, it's time to think about how you can improve your sleep from the inside-out. The most efficient way to do this is via supplementation.

The nutritional supplement market has exploded, bringing in billions of dollars of revenue every single year. Companies are selling all sorts of different vitamins and minerals with bold claims about how they can improve every single aspect of your health. Experts agree that most of them are just “expensive urine”, meaning that they pass through your body without providing any health benefit.

There are a few key supplements that are legitimate, however. There are numerous companies making sleep-enhancing supplements that are actually backed by science and work effectively. The best ones you should try are Melatonin and CBD.

### **Melatonin: The sunlight hormone**

Melatonin is likely the first supplement you think of when it comes to sleep-enhancing supplements. This hormone is naturally produced by your body and is linked to the sleep-wake cycle. When the sun goes down, your body starts producing the hormone as a signal to your body, letting it know that it's time to shut down and go to sleep.

Unfortunately our modern lifestyle seems to be suppressing melatonin. While our ancestors naturally produced the correct amount as soon as the sun went down due to the absence of light, we don't get the same opportunity.

Once the sun goes down most of us start (or more likely, continue) looking at screens. Cell phones, TVs, computers, and tablets are the biggest culprits. The blue light that your devices emit is exactly the same as the light that comes from the sun. Since sunlight suppresses melatonin production (you're supposed to be awake during the day), nighttime electronic device usage also shuts it down. Your devices are keeping you awake, even after you turn them off and lay down in bed.

There are several ways you can make sure that your body naturally produces melatonin. The first step is to expose yourself to sunlight during the day as much as possible. You need to let your body know that it's daytime so that it knows when to stop (and start) producing melatonin.

Open your blinds as soon as you wake up so that you immediately get a burst of sunlight. Take your lunch break outside. Open your blinds at the office and move your desk so that it's next to a window. Taking your dog for a walk (or just going for a walk yourself) during the day is another great way to get some more sunlight exposure.

The flip side of this is that you should limit your light exposure during the evening and nighttime, especially in the final hour before you go to bed. Close your curtains when the sun goes down. Limit your electronic usage and wear blue-light-blocking glasses when you inevitably decide to start staring at a screen. Wear a face mask when you go to bed. Close your doors and roll up a towel, placing it at the bottom of the door so that no residual light gets into your sleeping space.

Of course you can also purchase commercially-available melatonin supplements to help encourage your body to produce more of the hormone. Melatonin supplements are ubiquitously available at grocery stores, Amazon, and drugstores. Take 1-2 gummies or capsules an hour before bedtime and you should notice that you're falling asleep easier.

**Sleepline Approved Product:** [Amazon Elements Melatonin](#), from Amazon.com

### **How CBD can help you catch more Z's**

CBD is a craze that has taken the world by storm over the past few years and it's highly unlikely you haven't heard of it. Although you've heard of it, you might not know all of the details about this supplement.

Cannabidiol - abbreviated as CBD - is a substance known as a cannabinoid. Cannabinoids are chemical compounds found in the cannabis and hemp plants. The most famous cannabinoid is tetrahydrocannabinol, known as THC for short. THC is the substance that gets you high when you smoke or ingest cannabis.

Unlike its psychoactive cousin, CBD does not get you high. In fact, it doesn't alter your consciousness at all. The main benefit of CBD is that it gives you a calm, relaxed feeling that helps to mitigate pain, reduce depression, alleviate inflammation, and improve sleep.

Insomniacs have been using CBD to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer ever since the compound was first identified and commercially isolated from the hemp plant. A common misconception is that commercially-available CBD comes from actual marijuana plants, but in reality it all must be extracted from the hemp plant under a federal law that was passed in 2014.

This is because cannabis is still a Schedule I drug at the federal level, despite the fact that the majority of states have legalized the drug for recreational and/or medical use.

The modern CBD market is much different than it was even a few short years ago. There are a wide variety of companies making CBD-infused everything peddling their products all over the internet. Gummies, tinctures, oils, cookies, capsules, and even pillows are among the types of CBD-infused products you can buy today.

The best way to improve your sleep using CBD is to combine it with the power of melatonin. Manufacturers were quick to notice that a lot of their customers were buying CBD to help them relax before bedtime. Companies like CBD FX and Pure Hemp make specially-formulated gummies that are infused with both CBD \*and\* melatonin to enhance the sleep-improving aspects of the compound. This powerful combination should help even the most stubborn insomniac. Look for products that have the word “sleep” in the title when browsing CBD websites.

**Learn More:** [Recommended Brands of CBD Gummies](#), from Sleepline.com

### **Other supplements you can take**

Magnesium and L-theanine are other great options you can try if you're having difficulties with falling asleep. They are both all-natural compounds that are also sold in stores in capsule or powder form.

One of the most common minerals on earth, magnesium is also an essential part of your diet. Magnesium is used in over 600 cellular reactions in your body, making it one of the most important minerals in human health. It's necessary for proper bone and heart health, and every single cell and organ in your body needs magnesium to function properly.

Magnesium activates your parasympathetic nervous system, the system that is responsible for keeping you calm and relaxed (obviously an essential state for going to sleep). It also regulates melatonin so that it's functioning correctly and releasing into your body at the correct time (just before bed).

Most interestingly, magnesium binds to your gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) receptors. GABA is a neurotransmitter that is responsible for reducing nerve activity. The reason why this is so interesting is because it's similar to the way notorious sleep drug Ambien works.

L-Theanine is an amino acid that is naturally present in tea, with black tea and green tea having the highest concentrations. No matter what time of day or night you drink it, we can all agree that a cup of tea has a relaxing and calming effect. This effect is obviously most desirable before bedtime when you're trying to wind down for the night.



Most forms of tea also include caffeine, which is a substance that can keep you awake. That's why lots of insomniacs like to consume L-theanine as a supplement in capsule form. Take 1-2 capsules a couple hours before bedtime for a calming effect that will help you drift off with ease.

L-Theanine works by elevating your GABA, serotonin, and dopamine levels. The neurotransmitters regulate your mood, emotions, alertness, and sleep. Increasing levels of these calming brain chemicals by taking an L-theanine supplement helps enhance your sleep.

**Learn More:** [Recommended Sleep Supplements](#), from [Sleepline.com](#)

## Chapter 10: Use Blue-Light Blockers

*“How many people on their deathbeds wished they’d spent more time watching TV? The answer is, no one.” – Stephen Covey*

Remember the circadian rhythm from chapter 3? Earlier in this book we gave you an overview of how your body knows when it's time to go to sleep and wake up. This is the part where we dig deep into how you can regulate your light exposure while still functioning in a modern society that is overflowing with screens and all of the blue light that they emit.

The most important factor influencing your circadian rhythm is light exposure. Earlier in this book we recommended that you expose yourself to natural sunlight during the day as much as possible so that your body knows that it's daytime. That daylight exposure is crucial because then your body knows that it should start producing melatonin once the sun goes down and you're deprived of light.

Unfortunately, in modern times we don't stop staring at bright lights when the sun goes down. In fact, many people get *even more* blue light exposure in the evening because they sit down on their couch in front of the TV with a laptop open, checking their cell phone every few minutes.

The sedentary, technology-obsessed nature of modern American society makes it a disaster for sleep health. The blue light from your devices is by far the biggest reason why we've seen an explosion in insomnia and other sleep disorders over the past couple decades.

When you stare at a screen when the sun goes down, your body literally thinks that you're looking at the sun. That's because the blue light that's emitted from your electronic devices is the same type of light that the sun produces. When you come home from work just to spend more quality time with your phone and TV you're quite literally tricking your body into thinking that it's still daytime. This is a disaster for your circadian rhythm and, consequently, your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night.

The best thing you can do is to restrict your electronic usage in the evening. Start turning off your TV and computer a couple hours before bedtime and don't look at your phone unless absolutely necessary. This will limit the amount of blue light that your body is exposed to, which will cause you to start producing melatonin (the hormone that causes you to fall asleep at night).

For some people the idea of restricting their device usage seems unrealistic or oppressive. In that case you should invest in blue-light-blocking glasses that you can easily buy online. You can also install software on your phone and computer that automatically turns off the blue light when the sun goes down in your time zone. I personally use the f.lux app with excellent results.

You might feel like a dork walking around your house wearing blue-light-blocking glasses on your face but you and your family will quickly get used to it. The ability to sleep soundly throughout the night is priceless and worth the cost and discomfort associated with wearing them.

Blue-light-blocking glasses aren't a holy grail that will cure all of your sleeping issues overnight. Think of them like icing on the cake. You have to do the hard work of making sure that your sleep hygiene is in order, make sure that your sleeping space is optimized for high-quality sleep, and take care of your health first. Once you've done all of that, buying a set of glasses to block out that nasty blue light will be the thing that takes your sleep to the next level.

**Sleepline Approved Product:** [Pixel Eyewear Blue Light Glasses](#), from Amazon.com

## Appendix: Your Action Plan for Better Sleep in 12 Days

*"You'll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind."* – Irish proverb

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Set your thermostat to < 70 degrees Fahrenheit.	Stop drinking caffeine at 4 pm.	Install blue-light-blocking software on all devices (f.lux is a good choice). Buy blue-light glasses.	Gradually tighten and relax your muscles while laying in bed, starting with your extremities.
Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
Install blackout curtains on your	Start using one of the following	Start wearing earplugs or using	Roll up a towel and place it at

windows.	supplements: CBD, ashwagandha, magnesium, melatonin.	a white noise machine to reduce the amount of noise you experience.	the bottom of your bedroom door to block out unwanted light.
Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12
Begin a new exercise routine.	Stop drinking alcohol.	Stop eating two hours before bed.	Research new mattresses. Focus on the following factors: body type, sleeping position, and firmness preference.

## Appendix 2: Approved Mattress Brands

**Amerisleep** - The original mattress-in-a-box brand is still going strong and creating legendary mattresses. I personally sleep on an Amerisleep AS5 - read my review [here](#) - and I \*highly recommend\* buying one for yourself.

**Tuft & Needle** - This brand does it all. They make a variety of different mattresses but are most famous for their line of bedding products. This is a brand to go to if you're looking for a one-stop-shop for all your sleep needs.

**Eight Sleep Pod** - The ultimate smart mattress. The Pod features room climate and weather response technology, heart rate variability monitoring, and a gentle wake up mode. Once you sleep on a smart bed, all other mattresses seem completely ridiculous.

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