

## 5 Easy Top Tips to Improve Your Sleep

Do you feel tired and irritable?  
Feel like you're not getting enough sleep?

Sleep is essential to our overall feeling of well-being and our long-term health, reducing our risk of mood disorders, heart and blood pressure issues as well as obesity and diabetes. Sleep is known to improve physical and physiological wellbeing, so it really helps to have some simple helpful habits in place.



### Here are 5 top tips on improving your sleep that you can start using tonight!

- 1 Really try to switch off all electronic devices an hour before bed. Yes, that means getting off your smart phone, tablet and not watching TV or Netflix on your computer. The light emitting from these devices mimics natural daylight, which tricks your brain into thinking it's still daytime. This affects your natural sleep cycle. Plus, scrolling through social media, email, news or browsing the web, stimulates your mind and doesn't encourage restfulness.
- 2 Read the paper or a book instead of an iPad or kindle before bed. Studies have shown those who read on an iPad before bed took longer to fall asleep and slept less deeply compared with those who read paper books at night.
- 3 Caffeine stays in your blood for hours after drinking it. Which means drinking coffee late in the afternoon can leave caffeine in your system at bedtime. This can prevent sleeping or disturb sleep quality. So, see if you can avoid caffeine later in the day.
- 4 We spend a third of our lives in bed, so your bedroom needs to be set up to help you sleep. It's best dark and cool. We need darkness to trigger our body's natural rhythm of sleep. Our body can detect any kind of natural or artificial light, which activates our awakening response.

Aim to have your bedroom as dark as possible. Switch off all lights and get heavy curtains or maybe invest in an eye mask. It doesn't have to be anything expensive, just go for a comfortable, natural fabric one.

A cool 16-18°C (60-65°F) bedroom is thought to be the most ideal for sleep but play with different sheets or blankets to find your most comfortable temperature.

- 5 Create a bedtime routine. Do something peaceful or relaxing for at least 30 minutes before going to bed. Creating a calming ritual helps your body know you're getting ready to sleep. Try one of these:
  - Hot bath or shower: The rise and fall in body temperature induces sleepiness and helps you to have a more restful sleep.
  - Reading
  - Calming music, audio story or podcast
  - Meditation – if helpful, use an app to guide you
  - Gentle stretching

So... why not try at least one of the above tips and notice the difference in your sleep!

#### Author Bio

Nicky Rapley, mBANT, CNHC, is a certified Nutritionist and Yoga teacher. Following 3 decades working in the highly demanding Film and Event industries she had a huge wake-up call – Cancer. Retraining as a Nutritionist she's now on a mission to prevent others getting into unhealthy habits like she did!

#### References

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