

## **EVENING ROUTINE**

A good night's sleep is essential to living a successful life. When we sleep our body repairs itself, builds muscle and consolidates the short-term memories into the long-term.

Sleep improves your creativity, focus and REDUCES STRESS. When we don't get enough sleep, it greatly compromises both our mental and physical health. We feel more negative emotions like anger, anxiety, fear.

Unfortunately, most of us don't get enough sleep. If you think that you are too busy to sleep, it means you need it even more than most people. That's why it is important to create an evening routine.

Creating a schedule is one of the best things you can do. By setting a regular bedtime, you train your body and brain to start slowing down at certain times. Our bodies naturally tend to get sleepy around 10PM – 11PM. Getting up at the same time everyday is as important. Consistency is crucial to a good night's sleep. Sticking to one sleep schedule improves your memory, sleep, and focus.

Don't drink or eat stimulants before bed. Exercise each day so you're tired. And do something to help you unwind each night. Make a gratitude list, think what you would like to achieve the next day, go for a walk, meditate or have a cup of tea.

Here are some more points worth considering<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. Exercise in the morning.

A study done by Appalachian State University had people exercise at 7AM, 1PM, and 7PM. On average, morning exercisers spent time in the deepest, most anabolic stages of sleep, slept longer, and had more efficient sleep cycles.

Morning exercisers also had a 25% greater drop in blood pressure in the evening, which is correlated with the activation of your parasympathetic (rest-and-digest) system. Take advantage of these benefits by regularly joining our morning classes.

Morning exercise resets your cortisol, upregulates your metabolism, and helps you sleep better. Cortisol isn't inherently bad, but people who are awake at night and tired in the morning are producing the wrong amount at the wrong time. Morning exercise boosts cortisol so your cortisol is elevated in the morning and drops gradually throughout the day.

### 2. Stop drinking caffeine by 2PM<sup>2</sup>.

Caffeine is a stimulant that has a half-life of between 6 to 8 hours. If you can drink caffeine an hour before bed and sleep well, you're probably extremely sleep-deprived or spending nights stuck in Stages 1 and 2 of sleep. If you are constantly losing your keys, walking into a room and forgetting why you're there, or forgetting your grocery list, you are likely sleep-deprived.

### 3. Stop drinking alcohol 3 hours before bedtime.

The average human body takes 1 hour to digest 1 alcoholic beverage. 2 glasses of wine at dinner will increase sleep by about 10 – 12 minutes. Your third drink has major effects on Stages 3 and 4 of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://jimkwik.com/kwik-brain-025/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://jimkwik.com/kwik-brain-045/>

sleep. One reason you get hangovers is because alcohol affects your ability to get physically restorative sleep.

4. Stop exercising about 4 hours before bedtime.

There is no better way to improve your sleep quality than exercise, but exercise can be too energy-boosting for some people. It's much better to exercise in the morning. Make sure your exercise is improving, not disrupting, your sleep.

5. Give the sun a high-five every morning.

Get 5 – 15 minutes of sunlight exposure every morning. One reason people get 'morning fog' is because your brain is still producing melatonin. Melanopsin cells in your eyes are very reactive to light. When you see sunlight, they signal your brain's pineal gland to stop melatonin production. This is why the military raises all the window shades at first light. Consider getting a light box if you suffer from depression, especially in the winter. Many people get the 'winter blues' because they're not getting enough sunlight. Light boxes are used at the International Space Station because they see the sun rise and fall every 90 minutes. Depression is bad for your brain and affects your focus and memory.

6. Stop using your phone, tablet, laptop, TV 2 hours before going to bed

As well as keep it away from your bedroom at night. It is also a good idea to switch off the wi-fi in your house. It has been proven that all that is interfering with our sleep. They restrain the production of melatonin, the hormone that controls your sleep/wake cycle or circadian rhythm. Reducing melatonin makes it harder to fall and stay asleep. After spending an entire day surrounded by technology, your mind needs time to unwind. If you keep it on next to your bed at night it will also keep you awake, disturbing your sleep.

7. Get the right sleep nutrients.

Did you know that there is 400 times more of the sleep hormone melatonin in your gut than in your brain. Researchers at CalTech found that certain bacteria in your gut communicate with cells responsible for creating sleep-related hormones and neurotransmitters.

Avoid unnecessary antibiotics, chlorinated water, and processed foods, which destroy your microbiome.

Certain nutrients are building blocks or seeds for creating sleep-related hormones and neurotransmitters.

Optimize your Vitamin C levels and add more magnesium.

Magnesium is responsible for over 325 biochemical processes, many of which involve sleep and recovery. Magnesium is the #1 mineral deficiency in our world today. Magnesium is a stress-modulating mineral that also deals with your body's sympathetic nervous system.

8. Practice meditation.

The American Sleep Foundation and the American Journal of Sleep Medicine found that meditation is as effective as some of the best sleep medications. It is free and lacks side effects. I've tried to meditate many times and my brain always wanders. So if you are not into meditation yet, try this exercise. If you feel the same than simply do the RELAXATION exercise that you find under the chapter "stress".