

## Mastering Sleep

### Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene really works only when you have the root causes of your depression figured out. Once that is done, it is the icing on the cake that will keep you sleeping good every single night.

Some basic rules:

- No caffeine after 3:00pm.
- Avoid stimulatory foods:
  - *Sugar* - the worst, prompts the brain to release stress hormones that blocks sleep and causes blood sugar fluctuations that can cause you to wake up in the night.
  - *Chocolate* – has stimulating ingredients including caffeine.
  - *Red Wine* – red wine has an excitatory transmitter in it that can affect sleep negatively. Honestly, you should cut out all alcohol at night if possible for better sleep quality.
  - *Aspartame* and *MSG* – these artificial ingredients not only are horrible for your mind and body but they also release excitatory neurotransmitters in the brain.
  - *Spicy Foods* – things like hot peppers, garlic, and ginger are too stimulating to eat close to going to sleep
- Avoid *quick digesting carbohydrates*
  - They act just like sugar – they will spike your blood sugar causing a release of insulin and a resulting release of cortisol which will wake you up in the night.
- Eat Calming Foods
  - *Turkey* has high levels of L-Tryptophan, which results in better sleep.
  - *Almonds* and *nuts* are rich in L-Tryptophan and magnesium.
  - *Leafy greens* like *spinach* and *kale* are high in B-Vitamins and magnesium.

Tips for improving falling asleep and staying asleep:

- *Dark room* – sounds obvious, but if you can spend the extra effort to get dark shades and really black out your room, you will start to sleep like you are in a coma.
- [Sleep Mask](#) – easiest way to make your room dark. Take wherever you go, and you can even use it when your room is dark to really ensure you get a good sleep.
- [Earplugs](#) – you can wear these every night to block out any noises that might bother you.
- *Turn the A/C up* – you sleep better in colder temperatures. Researchers were confused as to why people fell asleep better after taking a hot shower. What they discovered was it wasn't the hot shower that caused them to fall asleep, it was the sudden drop in temperature when they got out of the shower. The drop in temperature signals to the body that it is nighttime.
- Aim to go to sleep every night at the same time and wake up in the morning at the same time. If you can successfully do this every day, you will fall asleep extremely fast and wake up refreshed every time.
- Don't look at bright lights a few hours before going to sleep
  - Only leave on lights in the house that are dim. Don't sit in your bed watching youtube videos on a bright screen while you try to fall asleep – the bright blue and white light will keep you awake as it triggers in your eye that it is daytime.
  - Get apps such as [F.lux](#) on your computer for it to automatically dim itself and take out the blue tones from your screen if you work on your computer frequently at night.
- Don't exercise at least 2 hours before bed as it is stimulating. Aim to exercise in the morning in the sun, if possible.
- Use a [lightbox](#) every morning to reset your circadian rhythm and improve sleep quality.

## Troubleshooting and Additional Tips

“Now that I've started to overcome my depression, I have too much energy at night and can't sleep”

- If you have too much energy at night, make sure you aren't exercising too late in the day and you aren't taking any of the stimulating amino acids like L-Tyrosine, L-Phenylalanine, or DLPA too late in the day.
- Try and do more intense workouts in the morning. It helps immensely with becoming tired at night.

Sleep is still messed up even after trying all these additional supplements and tips

- Check your Thyroid
  - Hypothyroidism can make you sleep too little or too much. A slow thyroid can interfere with serotonin and melatonin production.
  - Hyperthyroidism can make you be super awake at night. It can cause your whole system to race.
  - Get a doctor to check your thyroid if you have tried everything else. You may have a deeper issue going on that needs to be resolved.

St. John's Wort

- Some people find that [St. John's Wort](#) actually helps them sleep. St. John's Wort can be taken before bed as well to see if it can improve sleep quality.

Niacin

- [Niacin](#), the kind that causes a person to flush, can help many people sleep. Other people prefer to take the [no-flush version](#). Niacin is a B-Vitamin that helps many people relax and calm down. High doses of niacin has even cured people of schizophrenia. Niacin isn't the best at promoting sleep, but for some people like my brother, it helps them really relax and sleep deeper. It is a cheap supplement that if you really want to experiment it may be worth trying.