

## Sleep: Supporting Clients to Achieve Restful Sleep - Part 1

Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo

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### Activities that Enhance Sleep

-  Get Outside in the Morning Sun
-  Sedative Herbs and Supplements Before Bed
-  Schedule a 3-Day Sleep Vacation
-  Sleep in as Dark an Environment as Possible

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### Get Outside in the Morning Sun

- ✓ Study of office workers: Effects of daytime natural light exposure and sleep at night
  - ✓ 27 in windowless workplaces
  - ✓ 22 in workplaces with windows
- ✓ Evaluated by the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and a monitoring technique known as “actigraphy”
- ✓ Those with windows received 173 percent more natural white light exposure during work hours and slept an average of 46 minutes more per night

<http://www.drRitamarie.com/go/PMC4031400>

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### Acute Effects of Bright Light Exposure on Cortisol Levels

- 20 healthy men and women
- 9-10 days of exposure to ~10,000 lux of bright light for 6.7 h
  - **Findings:** Bright light exposure during rising and descending phases of cortisol rhythm reduced cortisol levels
  - **Hypothesis:** A multisynaptic neural pathway from the retina, to the SCN, to adrenal glands, that bypasses HPA axis
- Window of sensitivity: When cortisol levels are highest
- Most applicable to shift workers and travelers exposed to bright light during the biological night
- Exposure to morning sunlight may have a greater effect on adrenal cortex physiology than previously recognized



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### Sedative Herbs and Supplements Before Bed

- ✓ Valerian
- ✓ Lemon balm
- ✓ Passion flower
- ✓ Chamomile
- ✓ Kava kava
- ✓ Melatonin
- ✓ L-tryptophan
- ✓ 5-HTP
- ✓ L-theanine
- ✓ Vitamin B3
- ✓ Magnesium



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# INE: Sleep - Supporting Clients to Achieve Restful Sleep



## Take a 3-Day Sleep Vacation

- ✓ 12 hours of sleep at night - in bed even if not sleeping
- ✓ No stimulants like coffee or alcohol
- ✓ Power down all electronics and remove clutter from bedroom
- ✓ Listen to relaxing music and take an aromatherapy bath
- ✓ Stay awake and alert in the day – low stress activities
  - ✓ Take a gentle walk or hike
  - ✓ Read a book
  - ✓ Play board games
- ✓ When bedtime approaches, be mentally and physically ready for a long and restorative sleep



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## Sleep in as Dark an Environment as Possible

- ✓ Exposure to light stimulates a nerve pathway from the eye the pineal gland
- ✓ Pineal gland produces melatonin in response to darkness
- ✓ Too much light right before bedtime decreases the production of melatonin
- ✓ Exposure to unnatural light cycles may increase risk of depression



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## Supplements to Help With Sleep

- ✓ Melatonin
- ✓ Sedative herbs
- ✓ Essential oils
- ✓ Adaptogens
- ✓ Amino acids
- ✓ Vitamins
- ✓ Minerals



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