

## 10 Ways to Improve Your Sleep... Starting Tonight!

Sleep. The one thing we *all* love. So why is it that when we most want to put our heads down on the pillow and dream away that we can't fall into that slumber state? Instead our brain goes into overdrive, making up its' own stories to keep us awake! From tossing and turning to the thoughts in our heads, drifting off to sleep is e x h a u s t i n g. So I've rounded up my top 10 ways to improve your sleep starting TONIGHT...

1. **Turn off the tech or at least turn on night mode** - This won't be the first time you've heard someone say "if you can't get to sleep, put your phone/tablet/laptop away" but it really is true that it keeps your mind active when you want it to be resting. It also poses the risk of you coming across something that makes you anxious... like comparing yourself to that person you follow on Instagram or some news that incites fear in you. NOT what you need right before bed. *But* if you really can't part with your device, you should try turning on the Night settings. On an iPhone, swipe up on your home screen to turn Night Shift on (you can even set it to do it automatically between certain times) which will dim your screen. You can also do this on Twitter... click the Settings icon on the app and select 'Turn on night mode' -- this will change your feed colour and make it easier on your eyes.
2. **Read a physical book & take a hot bath** - The ultimate way to spend your evening after a busy day of work. Soak in himalayan salts for total relaxation and opt for a book that you can indulge in but *will* be able to put down when it comes to bedtime.
3. **Exercise** - While the right kind of exercise can get the blood flowing and wake you up for the day, there are also plenty of activities you can do to prepare you for bed like yoga. Be sure to cool down and take a cold shower to bring your body temperature back down, as well as avoiding working out in your bedroom.
4. **Try a weighted blanket to calm you** - If anxiety is keeping you up at night, then opt for a heavier duvet. It can make you feel more secure, plus the weight of it will encourage your body to relax and drift off more easily.
5. **Let your pet share your bed** - This is actually really good for you *and* them. Your dog especially likes to be able to protect you and will be comforted knowing that they're right by you to do that. Their warmth and unconditional love allows you to rest peacefully for the whole night long.
6. **Make sure you've got a good mattress and the right pillows for you** - Is there anything worse than an uncomfortable bed? If you're someone who can fall asleep quite literally anywhere, then you're probably not reading this post. So for most, it's vital to have a supportive mattress and pillows suited to the way you sleep. Your mattress is one of those things that's worth investing in as a good one should last up

to 8 years. So even though you can't do this one *tonight*, it's definitely worth considering purchasing ASAP!

7. **Use lavender** - Unfortunately, it is one of those scents that you either love or hate. But it's renowned for helping you to fall to sleep with ease. Whether you purchase (or DIY) a lavender pillow spray or wash your bedding & pjs with products that contain it, you'll definitely get used to it and when it starts to help you drift off, you'll soon forget you weren't a fan!
8. **Track your sleeping habits** - Have you ever thought about whether the food you eat right before bed keeps you up? Or whether you've had a stressful day or are in a different bed? There are so many reasons you could be struggling with insomnia. If you end up needing to take something to help you, your doctor will likely ask you to keep a sleep diary. Thankfully there are free apps that can monitor when you fell asleep, when you were in a light/deep sleep, when you were awake and also allow you to input anything that was different that day. Understanding this can help you to minimise any external factors that can disrupt your sleeping pattern.
9. **Listen to the 8-hours sleep music on YouTube** - If you need to have your phone under your pillow, then at least use it for something that will help you get into that dream state. There are so many different playlists and even some individual tracks that will keep playing throughout the night to get you in the right zone for sleep.
10. **Focus on your breathing and letting everything go from your body** - If you do meditation then you'll already be familiar with focussing on your breathing, but if not, simply count your inhales and exhales up to seven, repeatedly. Sticking with this number means that you won't begin to challenge yourself or spend the time concentrating on counting over your breathing. As you breathe, imagine yourself releasing any tension from each part of your body, going from head to toe.

Sometimes the more you think about not being able to sleep and the bad nights you've had previously, the more difficult it is to get to sleep. Try one or more of these tips and you'll soon be able to snooze with ease.