
FIVE-DAY CHALLENGE TO CREATE BETTER SLEEP

If you're going to encourage the restorative benefits of sleep, you need to get on board with creating the best "getting into sleep mode" for you. This five-day challenge will give you the necessary tools for those random, sleepless nights.

I encourage you to take the five-day challenge no matter where you fall on the sleep-quality scale. I also recommend starting this on a Sunday night, since that's the beginning of the weekly routine.

This is how it works:

1. **Day 1: Set your bedtime for the night (seven to nine hours before you need to wake up) and DO NOT USE anything with a screen at least 30 minutes before bed.** Go to bed at the same time for the rest of the challenge — and for as long as you can after the challenge. Going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day, even on weekends, is crucial for setting your body's internal clock, which experts call your circadian rhythm. Staying consistent also means that your sleep quality will be better.
2. **Day 2: Create a new, soothing bedtime routine.** Light a scented candle, diffuse some essential oils, take a bath (with essential oils) or read a book with a reading light for 30 minutes before bed. Here are some book recommendations that are related to my program. [Loving What Is](#) by Byron Katie, [Emotional Intelligence](#) by Travis Bradberry, and [The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck](#) by Marc Manson.
3. **Day 3: Be mindful of when you had your last infusion of caffeine or alcohol.** It can take hours for caffeine to wear off, which can make it harder to fall — and stay — asleep. **Avoid caffeine for at least to six to eight hours** (or more, depending on how you sleep) before bedtime. If you do have an afternoon coffee, choose decaf. When it comes to alcohol, you might think it makes you sleepy, but that's only the initial reaction. It actually lowers the quality of your sleep by altering nighttime melatonin production, which plays a key role in your body's circadian rhythm, so **try not to drink it in the evening.**
4. **Day 4: Don't eat a big dinner late in the evening, but don't go to bed hungry either.** Late-night eating may negatively impact both sleep quality and the natural release of Human Growth Hormone and melatonin. On the other hand, going to bed on an empty stomach or hungry can also keep you up later. An evening snack like a *banana with almond butter* would be great. Remember to go easy on any liquids before you hit the hay to prevent trips to the bathroom in the middle of the night.

5. **Day 5: If worries and anxieties keep you up at night, write them down.** Do you have the problem of lying in bed and repeating (or obsessively thinking about) something important you need to remember to do the next day? If so, that habit is likely keeping you up at night. One simple, effective solution is to write down your worries and the points you need to remember for the next day before going to bed. That way, you know you won't forget anything important and you can relax.