

NIGHT NIGHT SLEEP TIGHT

BEDTIME ROUTINE – IT'S NOT JUST FOR BABIES



A warm bath, comfortable pyjamas, and a story before bed. This hour of transition from a hectic day to bedtime, seems to be a magical formula for sleep as a child. As adults we seem to run on caffeine and adrenaline to keep up to the day's work and family demands, and then expect to fall into a deep slumber the moment our head hits the pillow. Taking advantage of every productive minute of the day doesn't leave the time to transition from "Go Go Go" to "Night Night" easily. We lose the value and benefits of a bedtime routine to help us relax and wind down to ensure sufficient sleep. Prepare your body and mind for sleep with a regular bedtime routine and make your productive hours more efficient.

Create a night routine that works for you.

Here are some items you can incorporate to promote a good quality sleep and a happier, healthier you!

Bedtime Routine Checklist

- ✓ **Determine what time you need to wake up** and figure out your bedtime based on the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep required for adults.
- ✓ **Complete any household chores and simple tasks** to prepare for the next day that may otherwise be left on your mind. For example: prepare any lunches, set out your clothes for the next day, sign any forms that have come home with the kids...etc.
- ✓ **Set aside 15 minutes for exercise.** Slow paced yoga, stretching, light impact or static activity such as squats, lunges, or curls.
- ✓ **Take care of personal hygiene.** Brush your teeth, remove makeup, and take care of your skin routine.
- ✓ **Limit technology 30 minutes before bed.** Studies show that the blue light from devices interferes with the production of melatonin, the hormone for sleep.
- ✓ **Make time to implement a regular relaxation technique.** A hot bath, relaxing tea, read a book, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, breathwork or mind calm exercises.

Note: If you are a shift worker, it can be more difficult to create and maintain a regular bedtime routine. Have a routine for day shifts and for night shifts, and if possible, try to arrange shifts to keep your schedule as predictable as possible.



Using relaxation techniques for a more comfortable and relaxed state of mind is time spent nurturing your overall health and wellbeing. Studies show relaxation techniques, in combination with a healthy lifestyle and good sleep habits, can reduce tension and change the thought process that affects sleep.

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Warm cup of tea and a good book

It doesn't have to be complicated or even backed by science. The soothing comforts of a warm drink before bed have been known for centuries. A moment of peace when you need it most. Combine a warm tea with a good book to break the thought processes that keep you awake at night and escape from the tensions and stressors of the day. Choose herbal teas like lavender, chamomile, valerian, holy basil or lemon balm known to reduce stress and anxiety and promote sleep.



Progressive Relaxation Technique

A system of tensing and relaxing all muscle groups in the body and a 10-15-minute session is all you need to experience the benefits of sleep. Lie down flat, free of distractions and breathe as you move through the sequence. Tensing and releasing muscles from your forehead to your toes. Tense and release. For more information on PRT and instruction please go to: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/MuscleRelaxation.pdf>



Meditation and Mind Calm Exercises

Being more mindful brings focus to the present without the worries and concerns about the past or what lies ahead. Dr. Benson's 2015 study published in the JAMA of Internal Medicine showed that mindful meditation encourages the relaxation response, a shift from the opposite, stress response. A daily 20-minute practice can help with sleep and naturally build the relaxation reflex. Imagery, breathing awareness, coloring, or a silent bath are other ways to welcome this form of relaxation into your life. Apps can make it easy to fit mindfulness into your sleep routine. You can choose your preference of technique from breathing to guided imagery. Some of the most popular include: **Insight Timer**, **Headspace**, **Calm**, and the **Mindfulness App**. Look for them on iTunes or on the Google Play Store.



Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK279320/>
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