

# YOUR SLEEP ATTITUDE

How Changing Your Mindset Can Improve Your Sleep



A sleep mindset refers to the attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts you have about sleep. It encompasses how you perceive and value sleep, as well as the mental approach towards bedtime and the overall sleep experience. While a positive sleep mindset alone may not counteract poor sleep habits or address underlying health issues causing sleep disturbances, it can contribute significantly to overall sleep quality. How we approach sleep is mission-critical, and the good news is, it's something we can change!

## Accept the good and the bad.

It's helpful to recognize that some nights will naturally be better than others and acknowledge that certain situations may limit your control over achieving a perfect night's sleep. Instead of fixating on the impossibility of a good night's sleep, try embracing the idea that acceptance itself can positively impact your sleep. If you find yourself unable to sleep, rather than stay awake and fret, consider redirecting that anxious energy into activities that may aid in falling asleep.

**Try This:** Adopt techniques to calm the stress centers of your brain, like nightly meditation, deep breathing exercises, or visualization. This helps shift your nervous system away from fight-or-flight mode and steers thoughts away from sleep-related worries.

## See each night as a new night.

After a couple of nights of not sleeping well, you might start feeling anxious as evening approaches. The worry sets in because you fear another sleepless night. It's common to stress about what happens after a bad night's sleep, and this worry can make falling asleep even harder. It turns into a troubling cycle. But it's important to approach each night as a fresh start. Acknowledge that each night has its own potential for rest and recovery, and release the anxiety associated with last night's restlessness, instead embracing the opportunity for a good night's rest. By letting go of the worries, you give yourself a chance for a better, more restful night.

**Try This:** When you notice yourself fearing a bad night ahead, flip the script to change your mindset. Consider realistic dialogue such as "Maybe I'll have a bad night tonight. Maybe I won't" to remind yourself that previous events don't necessarily dictate what happens tonight.

## Change how you talk about your sleep.

You must acknowledge that your words, whether said to yourself or vocalized aloud, influence your experience. After a few nights of not sleeping well, you may start feeling anxious as evening approaches, and you think, "Here we go again... another sleepless night!" Your language has the ability to transform isolated instances into a narrative. Repeated often, it solidifies into an identity like "I'm just a poor sleeper." Perpetuating this mindset holds you back. Even adopting positive sleep hygiene habits like buying good pillows or screens-off practices won't bring change if the internal dialogue remains negative. Monitor your sleep language and replace negativity with compassion. Consider how you'd encourage a struggling child and apply the same supportive tone to yourself.

**Try This:** Brainstorm kinder responses for your common sleep challenges. This could be falling asleep, staying asleep, waking too early, etc. The goal is to foster a more positive and empowering perspective.

## Decide **AND DON'T** overthink it.

Adults make about [35,000 decisions each day](#) some conscious and others not. Consider routine tasks like brushing your teeth; you decided its importance once, and now it's ingrained. Apply the same principle to a lifestyle habit hindering your sleep. Make a single, committed decision, such as "I'm a person who shuts off her phone at 7 pm." Implement and stick to it consistently, sparing your energy for more critical decisions. This approach minimizes the mental effort needed, especially crucial when sleep-deprived.

**Try This:** Complete the following sentence with your one-time sleep-supporting habit - something positive that you do (vs. something negative you avoid): "I'm a person who \_\_\_\_\_."

