

Dreaming of a Good Night's Sleep – 8 Tips to Create a Restful Sleep

To **maximize productivity** for the following day, it is important to **start off on the right track**. Preparing yourself for your day's events begins with a good night's sleep. If you are tired of tossing and turning, follow these **7 tips** to enjoy an uninterrupted night of shut eye.

1) **Organizing yourself the night before** can help to alleviate stress, allowing you to benefit from a more restful sleep. Gather all materials that you will need for the next day. Prepare your lunch and breakfast to save time in your morning routine, finish your assignments the night before and have your bag packed and ready to go. When you are prepared, **your mind can rest** and stop racing about what needs to get done in the morning. Creating a routine of things you do before bed, as well as what time you go to sleep and wake up at will help your body gear towards a healthy sleeping pattern.

2) **Wash your bedding and sleepwear regularly**. Use all natural products when doing your laundry. A **good mattress and pillow can help with back and neck problems** and other health issues. Poor sleeping patterns can have a negative effect on the immune system, therefore increasing injuries and illness. Just as you must change your running sneakers to guarantee proper support, you must **change your mattress every eight to 10 years**. Spend a little extra to buy a top quality mattress. After all, over a third of your time is spent in bed, so it should be comfortable and inviting.

3) **Try not to exercise right before you go to bed**. Instead, wake up half an hour earlier and begin your exercise routine as soon as you get out of bed in the morning. Exercise no later than early afternoon to give your body time to cool down fully. Another reason to exercise for at least 30 minutes per day is because **people who exercise have an easier time falling asleep than non-exercisers do**.

4) It is important to try to **cut back on all caffeine products**, but especially be mindful of your consumption before bedtime. **Keep track** of how much chocolate, tea, carbonated beverages, alcohol and coffee you drink. Instead, have a glass of water or juice. These healthier alternatives will not speed up your heart rate and keep you awake as caffeine products can. **Avoid spicy foods and try not to eat at least three hours** before you hit the sheets. If you are hungry, have a glass of milk. The serotonin will calm brain chemicals. The higher the level of serotonin, the more relaxed you will be and able to fall asleep easier.

5) **Give yourself enough time** to get a pleasant and relaxing sleep. Your body and brain need to replenish. We often underestimate how much sleep our bodies really need. We think we can function on as little sleep as possible, but our bodies **need an average of eight hours per night**. Doctors recommend falling asleep

before 11pm. Go to bed **earlier than you normally would**. This can also help you to avoid constantly checking the clock and worrying about getting up. Also, **keep the same sleep routine even on the weekends**. Have a 20 minute nap later in the day if you are tired. **Don't overexert yourself and think you can catch up on your sleep** on Sunday morning.

6) It takes some **time to gear down from** a mentally and physically exhausting day. Try to watch something **light-hearted on television** before you go to bed, **listen to soft music** or **read a calming book**. Save repetitive and soothing chores for the end of the day, such as ironing or folding laundry. Pay bills and do heavy cleaning at least 2 hours before bed. Our minds continue to think about whatever we were doing before we fell asleep, so it is a good idea to create a restful mood for your mind and body. **Turn off phones** to avoid late-night disturbances and **stop using your computer** several hours before bedtime. Keep a notebook by your bed and record worries and tasks for the next day. This will help you clear your mind. After 20 minutes of unsuccessfully trying to fall asleep, **get up and go into another room**. The change of scenery will help you to get in the mood for sleep when you return to your bed.

7) **Create a conducive and healthy sleep environment**. Too much light may be keeping you awake. Dim the lights an hour before bedtime to prepare your mind. Turn your alarm clock away from you if it has a backlight or digital display. **Make sure your blinds block enough sunlight** or wear an eye mask and earplugs. Providing full darkness for your eyes will aid you in falling asleep faster. Keep your bedroom at a cool temperature. You need lots of **clean air** space and a **toxin-free room**. Remove any candles or scented products that may be interfering with your sleep, and throw away piles of papers or old magazines in your room. **De-clutter any extra dust collectors** that promote unhealthy air quality. Wash bedding and drapes in hot water to kill dust mites. Remember to replace your pillow every two years or at least wash it hot water periodically. Dust covers can be purchased to trap dust mites away in your mattress. To completely seal it off use duct tape over the zipper closure. Have your carpets cleaned periodically.

8) **Try deep breathing while counting** sheep. Try counting your breaths. Breathe deeply in and out **through your nose**.

The effects of sleep deprivation on our **everyday performance** can keep us from living up to our potential. Even a modest half hour lost per night can affect the way the body functions during the day. By following these suggestions, you will see an improvement in your sleep patterns and **wake up feeling refreshed**.

Permission to reuse or redistribute these materials is hereby granted provided they are reproduced or redistributed in their entirety with full attribution. (c) 2008 Colette Robicheau

Colette Robicheau, President of Organize Anything, is a consultant, coach, and public speaker offering corporate, residential, and personal organizing services. For more information contact Colette Robicheau, Organizing Consultant and Coach visit her website www.organizeanything.com or email info@organizeanything.com.