

9 Action Items That Help You Sleep Better

For most of us, sleep quality is affected. And so is sleep quantity. You can read more about [understanding the problem here](#). And we are all in agreement that amongst the various things we need to do to get healthier and fitter, sleep is amongst the simplest and most straightforward. To get started, [have you figured out how many hours of sleep you need?](#)

Here's some action items for you to fix your sleep!

1. **Sleep in a dark room.** Any light disrupts us and keeps us from falling into a restful sleep. The light from electronics is particularly harmful (see #2) but let's start with light-proofing the bedroom. Install black-out curtains which prevent any outside light to seep through, and put any thick tape on all LEDs that might be on (the A/C, for example). You are aiming for pitch black!
2. **No electronics** in the bedroom. It is simply a source of distraction that prevents you from falling asleep. Plus, [electronics emits a lot of light in the blue wavelength](#) which can disrupt circadian rhythms, which directly affects our health, metabolism and sleep quality.
3. Supplement with **magnesium**. You can do this via a powder or tablet - 200mg should good to start with - experiment from there. Increase dosage gradually if you don't see any change. Decrease dosage gradually if you experience loose stools (Magnesium also acts as a laxative). Or buy some epsom salts (bath salts), and soak your feet in warm water mixed with the salts for about 20 minutes in the evening. [Besides numerous benefits](#), it will help calm you down and fall into a deep sleep.
4. Some of us are **anxious** about missing the alarm the next day, and stress about it. If this is you, just buy a regular alarm clock and use it as a backup. Your phone alarm is set for 6am, and the old-fashioned alarm clock is set for 6.15am. A simple fix that will keep you less anxious!
5. **Breathing.** We tend to breathe through our chest, neck, and shoulders. Focus on breathing into your belly - your stomach should rise and fall rhythmically. If you wake up with a stiff neck, this will take care of it.
6. Sleep **posture.** There's no generic fix for this but sleeping in [savasana](#) does wonders!
7. **No Caffeine** after 4pm, for those of us who are affected by it, keeps us from falling asleep. So, avoid any and all caffeinated substances after 4pm.
8. **Distractions** and random thoughts keep us from falling asleep within a few minutes of hitting the sack. Here's a powerful and effective method to falling asleep. Focus on your breathing - in your head, think along with the inhale and exhale. As you inhale, the only thought in your head is *inhale* and as you exhale, the only thought in your head is *exhale*. Don't be too intense about it. And you will find yourself distracted - don't chide yourself, and don't follow that thought. Instead, as quickly as possible, get back to inhale-exhale. That's the key. Let other thoughts pass through - you just get back to focusing on your breath. And before you know it, you will be asleep!

9. If you are still unable to go to sleep, a 30 minute **routine** before sleep is something to try. Skip the TV, ensure dinner is done, and just spend a quiet 30 minutes doing a relaxed activity. And then head to bed.

Be patient, and work your way through as many of the recommended changes that you can implement. In less than two weeks, you will see a dramatic increase in your quality of life. This will feed into the other changes you might want to make - you will have more energy which will make going to the gym easier, you will have lesser cravings which will ensure sticking to your diet is easier. Start with fixing sleep, and you will truly be on the path to better health.