7 Secrets for Sweet Sleep

By Annie Barrett, M. A., Educator, Yoga Teacher, Health Coach
Hi! I’m Annie Barrett.

As an educator, yogi and coach, I am a holistic wellness provider trained and practiced in the daily habits and health principles of yoga, Ayurveda, habit change science and lifestyle design.

I help people up-level their lives with proven daily habits for health and happiness.
This talk is for you if:

1. You just don't sleep as well as you used to when you were younger.
2. Sleep issues have been an issue for you on and off throughout your life.
3. You tend to be a night owl and you know you aren't getting as much sleep as you need.
4. You have a hard time falling asleep.
5. You fall asleep fine, but tend to wake up in the early morning hours and can't get back to sleep.
6. You want natural solutions (not drugs) for great sleep.

My aim is to offer you proven strategies for a great night's sleep.
The strategies are simple, but...

This is not a silver bullet approach.

The strategies are simple, but they may mean you have to create some real changes in your life if you want to get great sleep.
There is no magic pill. There are no real secrets. The solution is in what you do every day.

There is no herb, supplement or drug that can entirely take the place of having an appropriate daily diet, lifestyle, and stress management routine. - Dr. Claudia Welch

Hippocrates swore to “prescribe regimens for the good of my patients.”
We have to prioritize sleep.

The truth is, most of us are incredibly busy and many of us get through life on little sleep. We don't give our sleep the attention it deserves.

What we want to recognize is that fatigue is a basic, natural sign from your body, like hunger and thirst. We need to pay attention to fatigue, just as we pay attention to hunger, for example.

Getting enough sleep is crucial for good health.
Statistics on Sleep in the United States

- 40% of Americans get less than the recommended amount of sleep.
- 20-40% of all adults have insomnia in the course of any year.
- According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, about 40 million people in the United States suffer from chronic long term sleep disorders each year and an additional 20 million people experience occasional sleep problems.
- Over 2 million children suffer from sleep disorders.
- 30-40% of children do not sleep enough.
- Women are twice as likely as men to have difficulty falling and staying asleep.
- Over half of those over 65 experience disturbed sleep.
- Sleep problems add an estimated $15.9 billion to national health care costs.
How much sleep do we need?

- Adults require an average of 8 to 8.5 hours of sleep each night.
- School aged children require 10 hours of sleep each night.
- Teens need 9 - 10 hours of sleep each night.
Lack of sleep is a cultural problem.

We are constantly striving to do more. Our doing more cuts into sleep. When we cut into sleep, we cut into the energy of the next day. Over time, this creates a lack of integrity in the body.
There is a compound effect of not getting enough sleep.

- Even if you eat well and exercise well, if you don't sleep well, it starts to cause problems for your body. If you consistently fail to get enough sleep, you create long term problems for your body/mind and life.
- **You age faster.**
- Insufficient sleep can create *increased inflammation* that wears on the immune system.
- **Insulin cycle and cortisol cycles are disrupted** and the body starts to suffer. Imbalances build over time. They build into the fabric of our physiology.
Facts on Insufficient Sleep:

- Inadequate sleep impairs our ability to think, to handle stress, to maintain a healthy immune system, and to moderate our emotions.
- Chronic sleep insufficiency/deprivation is related to **diabetes**, cardiovascular disease, weight gain, obesity, motor vehicle accidents and **wide range of psychiatric disorders including depression and anxiety**.

Once we attune to our natural rhythms, these problems diminish and can disappear.
The benefits of sleep ...

The costs of not sleeping well may well be the motivator to make changes in your life so you can sleep better. But, what’s even more important are the big prizes that sleep can give you.

Dr. Sara Gottfried writes: “It turns out that sleep can make or break your ability to lose weight, age slowly, prevent cancer, and perform at a high level.”

According to Shawn Stevenson of Sleep Smarter: “Sleep rebuilds you and keeps you youthful. High quality sleep fortifies your immune system, balances your hormones, boosts your metabolism, increases your physical energy and improves the function of your brain.”
My story on sleep!
Circadian Rhythms are key for health.

Your body has a built in 24 hour clock. This Circadian timing is tied to your sleep cycle, your digestion, immune system, blood pressure, appetite, mental energy and more. Scientists are only now beginning to understand exactly how important it is for the body to stay connected to the rhythms of nature. The disconnection from the circadian rhythms is called chronodisruption.

Chronodisruption has been linked to a host of health concerns, including poor cognitive function, mood disorders, sleep disorders, diabetes, obesity, daytime sleepiness, reduced school performance, reduced driving reaction time, substance abuse, heart disease and some cancers. (10,11)

- Dr. John Doulliard
Seven Secrets for Sweet Sleep

Here are seven simple strategies for optimizing your lifestyle for great sleep.
Get up early and get sunlight.

A good night's sleep begins at the moment you wake up in the morning. Get direct sunlight outside daily so that your body aligns to the solar clock and your daytime and nighttime hormones (cortisol and melatonin) get regulated.

Tip: Get direct sunlight outdoors for at least 30 minutes daily. Your body is most responsive to sunlight between 6 - 8:30 AM.
Day time and Night time hormones

Proper alignment to Circadian rhythms regulates your **melatonin** and **cortisol** levels.

**Cortisol**, a daytime hormone, is tied to helping you wake up and feel alert in the morning.

**Melatonin**, a nighttime hormone is tied to helping you wind down at night.

**How does sunlight help?**

Your skin absorbs UV rays from the sun that promote the production of Vitamin D and serotonin. Serotonin is transformed into melatonin, which is the star of the show when it comes to sleep quality.
Move Your Body Daily.

Studies show that daily exercise can make for a radical improvement in sleep quality. Get your body moving in the first part of the day, preferably outside, even if you also plan to exercise later in the day.

The Journal of Sleep Medicine found that patients with insomnia had a radical improvement in sleep quality when they had a consistent exercise routine.

Tip: schedule in your exercise and sleep appointments.
Reduce stimulants and alcohol.

Caffeine is a powerful stimulant and can stay in your system for 5 - 8 hours causing your body to produce anti-sleep hormones: adrenaline and cortisol. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but can negatively influence sleep quality, especially for women because women metabolize alcohol differently than men.

Tip: if you must drink coffee, set a curfew of 2 PM
Eat an earlier, lighter dinner.

Make lunch your biggest meal of the day. This is when your body has the most digestive capacity. Eat an earlier, lighter dinner. This way the food digests before you go to sleep. You will sleep better and wake up feeling lighter and more energetic.

Tip: Think soups and salads for dinner and eat your heavier meal for lunch.
Avoid screen time before bed.

This is one thing you can do to improve your sleep quality tonight!

The blue light emitted from your computer, tablet, TV and phone causes your body to create more daytime hormones like cortisol that keep you awake!

Tip: Get off the screen 90 minutes before bed.
Create an easeful evening ritual.

After dinner, do something that is moderately active to help digest your food. Walk, spend time in the garden or yard, read, or play a game.

Honor your fatigue. Engage in relaxing activities before bed for restful sleep. Enjoy a cup of herbal tea, read something inspiring, keep a gratitude journal, meditate, take a bath, listen to music, or give yourself a foot massage.

Tip: Wind down with the sun.
Make your bedroom a haven for sleep.

Don’t use your bedroom as a workplace, or a place to watch TV.

In general, the darker the room, the better. Dark sleep environments have been shown to help people sleep better. Blackout curtains and eye masks can help those who are light sensitive.

Tip: Don’t bring your work into your bedroom.
Lights out by 10 PM.

Get to bed by 10 PM. The time between 10 PM and 2 AM is the money time. These hours give you the most rejuvenative power from your sleep. At this time, your liver engages in detox. Beneficial hormone secretions are at their highest during this time. If you are constantly up and awake during these hours, your body won't be able to restore itself as well.
If you wake in the night...

Try:

- Meditation
- Relaxing breath exercises
- Guided relaxation
- Herbal teas

* Insight Timer App is a great resource!

Tip: If you still can't sleep, do some work to uncover the root issue. Is there an unresolved issue in your life? Get professional help.
Looking for more resources?

Visit https://www.vibrantsoulful.com/resources.html

Sample these free resources to support you in your vibrant soulful life!

- **Yoga Practices**: Video and audio practices.
- **Tip Sheets**: Tip sheets for wellness and healthy habits.
- **Wellness Talks**: Vibrant Living audio recordings.
Take the Vibrant Living Habits Course

The Vibrant Living Habits Course is a powerful immersive and dynamic group course for committed people who want healthy habits for a thriving body, clear mind, and easeful life. In this course, you will be educated and coached in the key habits for longevity.
Get a daily routine to help you:

- Move out of overwhelm and into ease
- Sleep better
- Have more energy
- Eat right for your body
- Up your daily movement practice
- Develop a daily meditation practice
- Streamline your day
- Tap into your innate capacity for strength and wholeness
- Age more gracefully
Want to explore your options?

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