

7 Sleep Strategies – Turn Restless Nights into Blissful Sleep

Sleep is an essential part of your life. So experiment with the 7 strategies offered here to turn a restless night into blissful sleep. When the time comes for a new mattress come in and *Smulekoff's mattress experts* will help you determine the best mattress for you.

1.) Timing is Everything

Go to bed and wake up at the same time all the time. Yes, even on weekends. Once you are getting the proper amount of sleep and develop a rhythm, you will automatically wake about the same time making your alarm unnecessary.

If you get out of rhythm, do not try to make up the sleep by sleeping in, taking an afternoon nap or going to bed early. According to Kansas State University sources, you should actually fight insomnia by going to bed later the night after losing sleep.

2.) Exercise

Believe it or not exercise is not only good for your heart and waist line, but is **important for a more restful night sleep**. Keeping physically active during the day provides the contrast mentally and physically needed for the quiet time of sleep. Work at least 30 minutes of strenuous exercise (brisk walking, swimming, jogging etc.) into your daily routine. It is not recommended that you pack in the high intensity walks or aerobics right before bed but gentle stretching may help you relax.

3.) Develop a Good Sleep Environment

This is easily done in a couple of steps.

First, **use your bed for sleeping**, not as place to get other things done. If you find you can't sleep get out of bed and sit in a chair to read or write or do some other quiet activity. Then once you're tired go back to bed to sleep.

Second, **keep the room cool between 60-70°F degrees**. Add more blankets to the bed and create a cocoon of natural body heat. Dr. Joseph Mercola, author of the "Total Health Program" recommends that you **wear socks to bed**. A study has shown wearing socks reduces night waking increasing the quality of sleep. Wearing socks is beneficial because the feet have the poorest circulation and feel cold before the rest of the body causing a disruption in sleep.

Next **move your alarm clock away from your bed**. This forces you to get out of the bed when it is time to get up. If you are having severe problems sleeping it is even better to remove the clock from view. A clock only adds to worry about not sleeping as you watch the sleepless hours tick by.

Lastly, some sleep better with the **addition of white noise or relaxation CDs**. Many find this type of noise, such as a fan, to be soothing. Baroque music is also a good choice as is any music with no words, no definite melody, and not a lot of change in the volume. Not everyone can sleep with noise in the background. If you are one of them or the noise that

you're hearing is anything but peaceful and soothing try using earplugs. If you use cotton, use balls large enough not to get stuck in your ear canal.

4.) Create a Bedtime Routine

Humans really are creatures of habit. A bedtime routine doesn't have to be long or complex just **consistent and relaxing**. Avoid stimulating discussions or activities. Read spiritual/religious or light material. Save those mysteries and thrillers for during the day. Fire up the aromatherapy relaxation candles, do gentle stretches and/or take a warm bath.

5.) Have a Snack

Certain foods enhance your ability to sleep. A **cup of warm milk** is good before bed. Milk has the essential amino acid L-tryptophan which stimulates the brain chemicals, melatonin & serotonin, believed to play a key role in inducing sleep. **A high-protein snack** several hours before bed will also provide L-tryptophan. Add **a small amount of fruit**, which can help the tryptophan cross the blood-brain barrier and you have a sleep enhancing healthy bedtime snack.

On the other hand, before bed you should definitely avoid caffeine, a chemical in coffee, colas, tea, & chocolate. Also, stay away from snacks high in grains and sugars and tyrosine-laden foods like cheddar cheese, ripe avocados, & fermented meats like bologna, pepperoni and salami. Alcohol should also be avoided before bed. Alcohol may help you get to sleep, but it results in shallow and disrupted sleep.

6.) Turn the Lights Out

We are biologically designed to **sleep in the dark**. Your pineal gland production of melatonin and serotonin, those sleep inducing brain chemicals, is stopped when exposed to light. So if you want to sleep better – sleep in the dark. If you wake up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom keep the light low or preferably off.

However, **light is important to restart your body clock** to its active daytime phase. When you are awake – be awake. Get into the sunlight or turn on the lights in the room.

7.) Clear Your Mind

Overcome mind-racing sleeplessness by journaling. Keep a journal or at least a couple sheets of paper close by your bed. If you think of something that you want to remember, jot it down instead of worrying the whole night. For major issues or thoughts, write down the issue, your thoughts, and potential solutions. This **puts the worry down on paper** allowing your mind to let go, so you can get quality sleep.

Insomnia or trouble getting enough quality sleep is often a result of a worn out mattress. If your mattress is over 7 years old look into the **new technologies and comforts** now available from the **nation's top brands** at Smulekoff's.