

Sleep More, Sleep Better

Sleep deprivation is responsible for an estimated 100,000 car accidents every year. This equates to an average of 1,550 deaths and 71,000 injuries. It has been linked to such disasters as the Chernobyl nuclear power plant blow-up, the *Challenger* space shuttle explosion, devastating oil spills in the ocean, and commercial airline crashes.

Sleep is non-negotiable. It's an integral component of health, wellness, and basic functionality. Our bodies rely on this sacred time to heal, assimilate nutrition, and decode the subconscious. Yet, so many of our daily habits sabotage the integrity of this essential ritual and the natural balance of melatonin, serotonin, and cortisol.

The loss of a single night's sleep will have a negative effect on mental clarity, work efficiency, and physical capability. It can even obscure your brain's ability to articulate ideas and its decision-making faculties. Long-running sleep deficiency is linked to increased systemic inflammation and hormone dysregulation. These, in turn, can be the catalyst for disease, dysfunction, and chronic illness.

A lack of sleep is associated with, but not limited to:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Memory loss
- Depression
- Immunity suppression
- Libido reduction
- Decreased fertility

- Stress
- Premature aging

The solution: sleep more, sleep better. Sleep is a vital function your body is desperate to experience at regular intervals. Let yourself steep in the optimal rest your body craves so it can thrive every single day.

By employing some simple strategies, you can dramatically improve both the quality and quantity of your shut-eye. Let sleep do the work, so you don't have to.

Bedding

The average person spends roughly 25-30% of their life in bed. Though we often give much consideration to the plush design and comfort of our clothing, cars, and couches, the way we equip our beds tends to be sorely lacking. However, given the crucial role sleep plays, it is absolutely worth spending the time and effort getting the details right. Your health literally depends on it.

What to Look For

Mattresses, Pillows, and Padding

Over the course of ten years, a mattress can double its weight due to the accumulation of dead skin cells and dust mites! Opt for a 100% natural latex-filled mattress. They are antimicrobial, antibacterial, dust mite free, and they inhibit the growth of mold and mildew.

According to materials published by Ohio State University, a typical used mattress may have 100,000 to 10 million mites inside. Ten percent of the weight of a two-year-old pillow can be composed of dead mites and their droppings. Mites prefer warm, moist surroundings such as the inside of a mattress when someone is on it. One of their favorite foods

is dead skin, and people shed about one-fifth of an ounce of the stuff every week, some of which surely ends up flaking into your mattress.” -Live Science

Conventional mattresses are full of harmful chemicals and fire retardants – up to 4 ½ gallons per mattress! Modern beds are rife with petroleum based foams, synthetic substances, and toxic industrial byproducts.

[...] the chemicals in a mattress can be a big source of exposure and have been linked to problems like allergies, asthma, fertility problems/hormone imbalance and even autism in sensitive individuals.” -Wellness Mama

With all natural mattresses and bedding (trusted source), you don't want to skimp on quality. Check for legitimate organic certifications, check into the businesses, and be wary of labels that tout “all natural materials,” as these labels are not reliable. There are some very nice, high quality all natural mattresses labeled as such, but there are also many more brands using the label meaninglessly.

Linens

You can produce up to 26 gallons of sweat per year – while sleeping! Going for organic, chemical-free linens will help with this issue by absorbing and dispersing that moisture. Wool stuffing, cotton, and silk bedding are excellent choices that provide both lasting comfort and hygiene. These materials optimize body temperature and prevent sweating. Avoid down filled pillows and duvets, as they are prone to mold and dust mites, which add an average of 7 lbs per year in mite droppings and debris!

Grounding/Earthing Mat

Earthing is credited with everything from lowered blood pressure and reduced pain and inflammation to an increased

quality of sleep, allowing you to feel calmer and more energetic.

Earthing can be accomplished by connecting your body to the ground or a natural body of water (think sitting in the park, taking your shoes off outside, playing on the beach), but for many, it is a difficult practice to do every day. Grounding mats provide a convenient way of connecting to the many benefits of earthing for those who cannot incorporate daily doses of rivers and tree climbing into their routine.

Grounding restores the healing energy that can get depleted through modern lifestyles, over exposure to electromagnetic field (EMF) sources, and a lack of connection to nature. Various sizes and shapes of mats are available, from those that fit comfortably into your shoes or on your desk chair, to sheets that you sleep on.

Your Room

The second factor to consider when developing better sleeping habits is your room. Even the softest organic cotton sheets aren't going to mean much if you're setting up camp in the middle of Grand Central Station. Calm it down and create a gentle ambiance that balances your cycles and rhythms of sleep, making the most out of your shut-eye hours.

How to Create an Amazing Sleep Space/Sanctuary

Feng Shui

Implement a little ancient Chinese wisdom in the form of Feng Shui. This practice is all about creating a sense of energy balance and flow that will calm the senses and encourage restfulness in your temple of sleep.

Disconnect from Technology

The blue light emitted by most modern bulbs, electrical appliances, and devices is extremely disruptive to our circadian rhythms. Avoid watching TV or using phones, tablets, and computers for 90 minutes before bed.

Fill your home and bedroom with warm light sources. Bulbs that give off yellow, orange, or red tones send signals to your brain that it is time to wind down.

Use light filtering glasses with orange lenses to reduce the effect of blue light exposure or try the free computer app *f.lux* that warms the light of your screen. By sunset, a sedating copper filter ensures easy night viewing.

Declutter and Make it Sacred

If a pile of unmatched socks, old magazines, and the looming treadmill are the last thing you see before tucking yourself in, the physical clutter will amount to mental clutter. This is never a winning sleep formula.

Fire up the Feng Shui to keep your to-do list out of sight by making your bedroom a sacred space. Don't let chores and projects spill into it. Remove anything that activates your mind away from a resting state. Books, paperwork, exercise equipment and anything that stimulates a stress response should be removed.

House Plants

Thriving green life in your bedroom naturally and efficiently filters and detoxifies the air, reducing the impact any disruptive chemicals may have on your sleep cycles.

Plants have a calming effect on the nervous system that promotes a sense of well-being. This is beneficial both upon waking and before turning in for the night.

Air Flow

Opening windows is the simplest and most effective way to introduce a fresh, de-ionized airflow into your room and house, creating a rejuvenating breathing environment.

Positive pressure systems can provide a non-intrusive solution to managing humid climates and preventing toxic mold accumulation.

Plenty of open space above and below the bed allows clean, replenishing air to circulate and prevent mold and dust build up.

Light Balance

Sleeping in darkness is essential for balancing circadian rhythms. Light pollution disrupts sleep, particularly in an urban environment. Black out curtains reduce exposure to artificial sources of light. The cumulative effect of small (often blinking) lights from electronic devices in your bedroom can add up. Remove devices from your bedroom (alarm clocks, phones, night-lights, chargers, etc.) or use dark electrical tape to cover the lights.

Conversely, sunlight exposure early in the morning increases cortisol production and helps regulate circadian rhythms. Open those curtains wide straight away! Getting outside during the day, even if it's only for a short lunchtime walk, dramatically increases circadian balance and melatonin production later in the day.

Temperature

This is a popular topic of discussion (or disagreement) between men and women, but stats show that the optimal temperature for sleeping is between 60 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit. If you start decreasing the temperature a little before the PJs come out, you'll send signals to your brain and

body that it's time for bed.

A bedroom that is too hot or too cold can significantly interfere with quality REM sleep. Make sure you have the best bedding to help regulate body temperature. Try natural fabrics that breathe properly for the your climate you're in.

Carpets

Carpets contain around 4,000 times more bacteria than your toilet. Additionally, they can be horribly toxic to humans and have a terrible impact on the environment, both through their production and disposal. Like conventional bed linens, synthetic carpets are petroleum based and laden with chemicals such as fire retardants.

Dust, dust mites (and their droppings!), moisture, and mold all accumulate in carpets. Opt instead for non-toxic, environmentally sustainable carpets and floor coverings. Better yet, remove carpets altogether and choose natural wood or stone flooring. If finances are a limiting factor, consider eco-friendly linoleum options.

Bright Colors in Room

Surround yourself with color and stimulate your nervous system with a bright pallet to welcome yourself awake. Striking up your senses in the morning helps to regulate your cortisol, the wake-up and activate hormone.

Always choose low VOC, organic, or water based paints to maintain low toxicity in your home.

Your Body

Sleep can also be deeply affected by what we put into our bodies. Take care to notice where these sneaky substances are cropping up, as some are much more obvious than others.

Both stimulants and depressants can disrupt sleep. Investigate, minimize, or eliminate the following for best dream-catching:

- Caffeine
- Nicotine
- Sugar
- Energy Drinks
- Alcohol
- THC/marijuana
- Prescription medication
- Over the counter drugs

Anyone suffering from regular insomnia should work on detoxifying the home, and balancing the body's hormones. If the gut isn't healthy, the endocrine system won't be healthy, the body will not sleep well. It takes energy to sleep and to heal while we sleep. Check out *Healing the Endocrine System and Leaky Gut Syndrome, and Autoimmune Diseases*, and also see *How Negative Ions and Positive Ions Affect our Health* ([click on the image](#)).

Final Thoughts

Sleep is not a peripheral adjunct to a healthy existence; it is the lifeblood. It's time to overcome the modern model of perpetual exhaustion and rebuild the ritual of sleep. Adopt conscientious strategies and revitalize your waking life.

Recommended Products:

- Green Lifestyle Market – Home
- Magnesium
- Mattress and Bedding
- B Vitamins
- Label Sleep Maintenance – Gaia Herbs
- Shillington's Nerve Sedative Formula
- Valerian Root

- More for Insomnia

Related Reading:

- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*
- *Insomnia – A Comprehensive Look with Natural Remedies*
- *The Glymphatic System – How Insomnia Leads to a Filthy Mind*
- *The Power of Our Hormones and How To Balance Them*
- *Natural Remedies for PMS, Mood Swings, Bloating, Cramps, Etc.*

Sources:

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- *Facts and Stats* – Drowsy Driving
- *The Truth About Organic Mattresses* – Wellness Mama
- *Why I Traded My Organic Mattress for IntelliBed* – Wellness Mama
- *Does Your Mattress Really Gain Weight Over Time?* – Live Science
- *5 Other Disastrous Accidents Related to Sleep Deprivation* – Huffington Post
- *The Bed Cost How Much?!* – Danielvitalis
- *Create a Perfect Sleep Environment* – Wellness Mama