Guide to a Good Night Sleep

Avoid before bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars. This will raise blood sugars and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low, you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.

Sleep in complete darkness or as close as possible. When light hits the eyes, it disrupts the circadian rhythm of the pineal gland and production of melatonin and serotonin. No TV right before bed. It is too stimulating to the brain and it will take longer to fall asleep. Also disruptive of the pineal gland function for the same reasons as above.

Wear socks to bed. Due to the fact they have the poorest circulation, the feet often feel cold before the rest of the body. A study has shown that this reduces night waking.

Read something relaxing. Don't read anything stimulating, such as a mystery or suspense novel, as this may have the opposite effect.

Avoid using loud alarm clocks. It is very stressful on the body to be awoken suddenly. Being startled can disrupt the adrenals. Try a dawn simulator which works with a set time to gradually turn a light on to full intensity over a period of time (30 to 45 minute period usually).

Alarm clocks and other electrical devises. If these devices must be used, keep them as far from the bed as possible, preferably at least 3 feet.

Avoid alcohol. Although alcohol will make people drowsy, the effect is short lived and people will often wake up several hours later, unable to fall back asleep. Alcohol will also keep you from falling into the deeper stages of sleep, where the body does most of its healing.

Lose weight. Being overweight can increase the risk of sleep apnea, which will prevent a restful night's sleep.

Avoid foods you may be sensitive to. This is particularly true for dairy and wheat products, as they may have effect on sleep, such as causing apnea, excess congestion, gastrointestinal upset, and gas, among others.

Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed.

Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed.

Remove the clock from view.

Keep your bed for sleeping. If you are used to watching TV or doing work in bed, you may find it harder to relax and to think of the bed as a place to sleep.

Have your adrenals checked by a good natural medicine clinician.

If you are menopausal or perimenopausal, get checked out. The hormonal changes at this time may cause problems if not addressed properly.

Don't change your bed time. You should go to bed and wake up at the same times each day. This will help your sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep and get up in the morning.

Get daily exercise. Exercising for at least 30 minutes everyday can help you fall asleep. Don't exercise too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake.

Listen to white noise or relaxing CD's. If you often lay in bed with your mind racing, it might be helpful to keep a journal and write down your thoughts before bed.

Melatonin and it's precursors. If behavioral changes do not work, it may be possible to improve sleep by supplementing with the hormone melatonin. However, I would exercise extreme caution in using it, and only as a last resort, as it is a powerful hormone. Ideally it is best to increase levels naturally with exposure to bright sunlight in the daytime (along with full spectrum bulbs in the winter) and absolute complete darkness at night. One should get black drapes so no light is coming in from outside. One can also use one of melatonin's precursors, L-tryptophan or 5-hydroxtryptophan (5-HTP). It is a simple amino acid.

Get to bed as early as possible. Our systems, particularly the adrenals, do a majority of their recharging or recovery during the hours of 11pm and 1am. In addition your gallbladder dumps toxins during this same period.

Check your bedroom for electromagnetic fields (EMFs). These can disrupt the pineal gland and the production of melatonin and serotonin, and may have other negative effects as well.

Keep the temperature in the bedroom no more than 70 degrees F.

Eat a high protein snack several hours before bed. This can provide the L-tryptophan needed to produce melatonin and serotonin.

Also eat a small piece of fruit. This can help the tryptophan cross the blood-brain barrier.

Reduce or avoid as many drugs as possible. Many medications, both prescription and over-the-counter may have effects on sleep.

Avoid caffeine. A recent study showed that in some people, caffeine is not metabolized efficiently and therefore they can feel the effects long after consuming it.

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). A gentle tapping technique you can learn in several minutes.

This information was provided by Mercola.com a natural health website.