



BETTER SLEEP

a friendly guide

VALERIA HOME

*“The amount of sleep required by the average person
is five minutes more.”*

Wilson Mizner

There are times when we feel like sleep gets in the way of our to-do list of the day. Especially if you cannot seem to be friends with sleep hours. But don't forget that night sleep is so important for our bodies! It boosts immunity, keeps our brain functioning, reduces stress, keeps weight under control and lowers the risks for certain diseases – just to mention a few of sleep benefits.

If you find yourself squirming in bed each night, unable to fall asleep, although you tried everything you could find on the internet or your friends told you to do, then this guide is for you. Don't forget that we are different, with different types of daily activities and needs. Read this guide carefully and see what works for you!



Your sleep needs a ROUTINE

Everybody knows that having a bedtime ritual is very important for kids, as going to bed and waking up at the same hour each day is essential for a well developed and healthy body. The Curious thing is that us, as adults, do not consider this as being important for our body. But trust the specialists when they say **OUR BODY LOVES SLEEP ROUTINE AND RITUALS.**

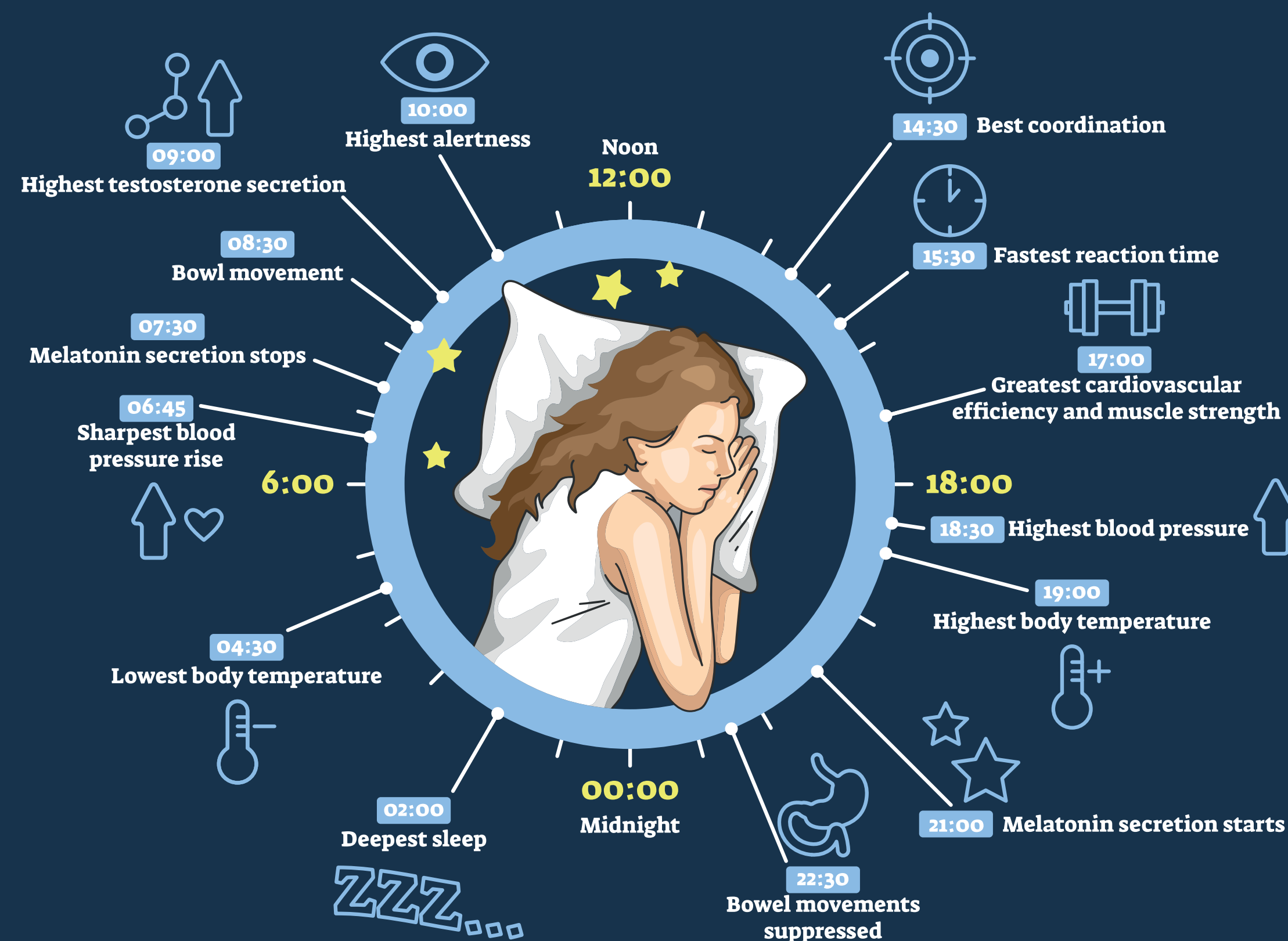
Sleep experts say that there shouldn't be more than an hour variation from one day to another – **EVEN ON WEEKENDS** – in order to keep our internal clock unstressed and running smoothly. *It's a matter of circadian rhythm.*

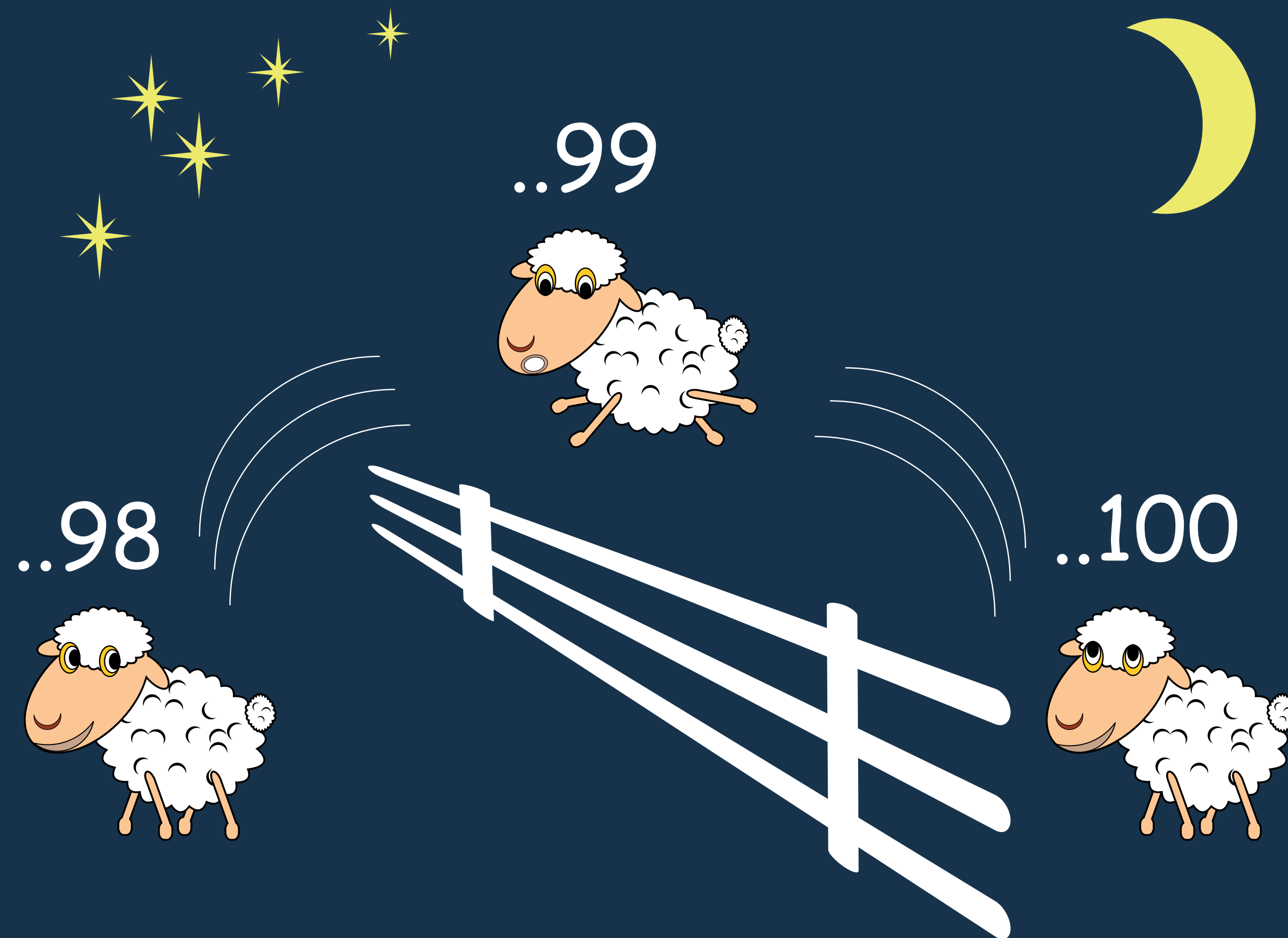
What is that? It's a 24-hour cycle that is part of your body's internal clock which runs in the background. It helps you carry out essential functions and processes. And one of the most important circadian rhythm is the sleep-wake cycle.

If you keep bedtime and wake time pretty regular, you help normalize this internal rhythm that keeps you from feeling awake around bedtime and drowsy during the day.

Your bedtime routine and ritual tell your brain that bedtime is coming, so your entire body prepares for bed. You can include in your every night ritual a warm bath, a glass of warm milk, a light stretching, a long walk or listening to a short story on an app, narrated by someone with a smooth, relaxing voice. All these can help you set the mood for sleep.

Circadian Rhythm





The DARK side of sleep

Keeping a daily bedtime routine is not enough. After you finished with your bedtime routine, don't plunge into your linens and turn on the TV, your tablet/phone/iPad etc. That's probably one of the worst ideas before sleep. Even though 95% of people use a light-emitting device just before bed, those blue lights have an immense influence upon our internal clock, disrupting our natural circadian rhythm. Energy-saving bulbs, laptops, cell phones also delay melatonin release, thus making it harder for us to fall asleep.

How dark should our room be?

Research say that light manages to penetrate the eyelids, inhibiting melatonin production, the hormone that helps with the timing of your circadian rhythm. Make sure all lights in the house are turned off, and then close the bedroom door. Consider using curtains or blinds for the windows. Don't go overboard with them, because you will still love the natural morning light to give you an energy boost and some vitamin D.

Also, if you often wake up at night to drink some water or go to the toilet, consider having a glass of water on your night stand and also installing motion-sensor nightlights. This way, you are limiting the exposure to light during the night and you can fall asleep again more quickly

✦ **TIP:** Consider buying a dawn-simulating alarm clock – you can pre-set it to slowly get brighter, this way simulating the sunrise and helping you to get that nice cortisol that you need.

Go OUTSIDE and PLAY

We do not want to leave out one important part of the sleeping process: spending time outside and regular exercises. If you are one of those persons who always say they do not have enough time to do both, consider exercising in a park, in the morning.

Daylight and sunlight are extremely important to regulate the daily sleep patterns and improving sleep quality. Spend at least 30 minutes outside in the natural light of the sun, on a daily basis. If possible, wake up at the same time as the sun does and expose yourself to the morning sunlight. It has a positive effect on your biological clock.

Try to exercise regularly, at least 30 minutes every day, but not in the evening. Maintain a 2-3 hour window between exercises and sleeping time. Exercising each day makes your body generate a natural sedative, which makes you sleep deeper and waking up well-rested.

Choose moderate aerobic exercises, because they help your body release endorphins, putting you in a really good mood. Recent studies show that regular exercise decreases sleep complaints and insomnia. They also show that aerobic exercise has similar effects as sleeping pills.



ZERO alcohol, coffee, nicotine and stress

Today's society has brought a lot of good things, but they also came with an expensive price for us: stress, overtiredness, insomnia. Every day, we are trying to find a way to cope with the busy day or relax after a tensed day. Some of us go for a coffee or a big chunk of chocolate, others choose a glass of wine.

It's not necessarily a bad thing, but you have to pay attention at the time. All these tension-release forms, after a certain hour, instead of helping you, they keep you awake at night. Coffee, cola or certain types of tea contain caffeine, which needs even 8 hours to completely leave your body. Nicotine is also a stimulant, often determining a very superficial sleep for the smoker. Furthermore, smokers can get up earlier in the morning, because of the nicotine withdrawal. Experts recommend: NO CAFFEINE after 2 PM.

If you choose to drink alcohol at the end of the day, take into consideration the fact that if you drink more than a small quantity, it can really affect your REM, keeping you from diving into a deep sleep. Also, it can contribute to breathing difficulties during the night, and you might wake up in the dead of the night, when all the alcohol leaves your body. Experts recommend: NO ALCOHOL 3 hours before sleep.

Better drink a glass of hot milk or a herbal tea to help you relax and have a nice, good night sleep.



Keep your dinner LIGHT and EARLY

Many of us tend to eat more, especially when we arrive home at the end of a full, stressful day at work. Food acts like a comforter, helping tame stress in our life. But pay attention to what, when and how much are you eating. Comfort food may help you reduce stress, but it can also bring other stressful elements, such as gaining weight or experiencing health issues. That is why it's vital to carefully choose what you eat. A healthy diet can notably contribute to the reduction of stress. Consult a nutritionist on this matter.

Keep in mind that you need a healthy, consistent breakfast to give you the energy to start the day and keep you on the positive side of the mood palette. Try to have lunch at lunch and not in the afternoon, because you have to push dinner later, because you are not hungry yet. And a late dinner, especially if it's a consistent one, can give you an indigestion, which will have a negative impact on your sleep at night.

You might consider drinking less liquids before going to bed, or you might find yourself waking up several times during the night to go to the toilet. Also, don't try to go to bed hungry, because a hungry stomach behaves as a stimulant to the brain's centre of wakefulness, meaning that you will not fall asleep easy at all.

And take into account the fact that YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT.





Smart BED(DING) choices

Even if everything we covered up to now is very important for a quality sleep, probably the most important element to take into consideration in order to improve your night hours, is the bed and the bedding choice. If you forget your night ritual or you have a small glass of wine, that does not disturb your entire night sleep as a bad bed or bedding does.

When you buy your bed, think about the space around it and especially about the size of the bedroom. If you have a small bedroom, don't buy a huge bed; it might make you feel crowded and can create a stressful environment and you don't want that. Also don't buy a single bed, even if you are alone. You deserve enough space to feel comfortable.

Make sure the bed looks good and has plenty of storage places, to help you put the messiness away and offer your eyes and brain a break.

When it comes to bedding, you should consult a specialist, to help you choose the best materials. The perfect mattress should have the correct tension – which is the key to support and comfort –, a high air permeability – which keeps you from overheating and sweating and should be made out of natural materials – in and out. Also, your head and neck should get the right support, and this is why you have to be careful to pick a pillow with the right size, height and materials (natural materials are always the best choice).

Don't squirm, DO SOMETHING else

There are nights when, even if you do everything right to prepare for a deep sleep, you can't seem to fall asleep. And that is the moment when you start squirming under the linens.

If you are still awake after you tried for more than 20 minutes to fall asleep or if you are starting to get anxious or worried, don't stay in bed. Wake up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy. The anxiousness brought by not being able to fall asleep quickly makes falling asleep harder to achieve.

Let's make a short list of nice things to do at night to help you get sleepy fast. **Reading** is always in top 3, except when you chose a crime or a dark book, in which case the book will only keep you awake, if not give you anxiety and preventing you from becoming sleepy.

Listening to a **relaxing music** playlist can help a great deal. Of course you can choose whatever music you like, but experts say that classical genre is soothing and calming to many people. You can also use nature sounds or sleeping apps.

You can also **stretch, meditate, take a warm bath/shower** or use **deep breathing** or **muscle relaxation techniques**. Whatever works for you.



Why do WE want YOU to sleep better?

We are highly invested in helping you sleep deeper, because we know how important this is for your physical and mental health. Our vision is not only to help you sleep better, but to wake up smiling, ready to take over the world.

That is why we created products that are aimed at maintaining you in a relaxed state of mind for a longer period of time and helping you start the day full of positive energy.

Besides, after a good night sleep, the real winner is your entire body. A full night's great sleep boosts your immune system, strengthens your heart, your memory is improved, you are in a good mood, your productivity and concentration are increased. A good sleep can help you maintain or lose weight, can improve athletic performance, can help you prevent depression, and many other benefits.

Junk sleep is the worst that can happen for your brain, your body and everyone around you. So make sure you take all steps necessary in order to have a great sleep experience. It's good for your entire being and for your entire social and professional life.



Worldwide statistics on sleep

51% of Adults Worldwide Don't Get Enough Sleep!!!

The importance of being well rested

From birth to seniority, our sleep needs change and we have to pay attention to this important aspect of our life. Babies and children need a lot of sleep to have a healthy development and growth. Adults need enough sleep to relax and to gather enough strength for the next work day. Seniors need enough sleep to maintain their health and to have enough strength to do everyday chores.

Research shows that women on average sleep 5 to 28 minutes longer than men. A variety of factors were tied to this finding, including differences in average lifestyle and employment.

On average, women need 20 minutes more sleep each night.

SLEEP NEEDS STATISTICS	
Age	Recommended amount of sleep
Babies aged 0-3 months	14-17 hours a day
Infants aged 4-12 months	12-16 hours a day (including naps)
Children aged 1-2 years	11-14 hours a day (including naps)
Children aged 3-5 years	10-13 hours a day (including naps)
Children aged 6-12 years	9-12 hours a day
Teens aged 13-17 years	8-10 hours a day
Young adult aged 18-25 years	7-9 hours a day
Adults aged 26-64 years	7-9 hours a day
Older adult aged 65 years and over	7-8 hours a day

Source: [singlecare.com](https://www.singlecare.com)

What are the risks of being sleep deprived?

We can all agree that it's better to prevent sleep issues than to treat them. It's also easier. Sleep deprivation comes with a lot of chronic health problems that need medication to be treated. You need sleep for proper physical and cognitive behaviour.

Also, please be aware that severe sleep deprivation can lead to early death. This is why we should pay extra attention to this essential function that allows our body and mind to recharge and get ready for the next day.

RISK OF CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS BY SLEEP DEPRIVATION

	Less than 7 hours of sleep	Greater than or equal to 7 hours of sleep
Arthritis	28.80%	20.50%
Depression	22.90%	14.60%
Asthma	16.50%	11.80%
COPD	8.60%	4.70%
Diabetes	11.10%	8.60%
Heart attack	4.80%	3.40%
Coronary heart disease	4.70%	3.40%
Stroke	3.60%	2.40%
Chronic kidney disease	3.30%	2.20%
Cancer	10.20%	9.80%

Source: singlecare.com

Let's go through all the tips again, to make it easier for you to remember them. Don't worry, if you forget one of them, you can always come back to this friendly guide and check the list again.

GUIDE TO A BETTER SLEEP

- 1** Your sleep needs a **ROUTINE**
- 2** The **DARK** side of sleep
- 3** Go **OUTSIDE** and **PLAY**
- 4** **ZERO** alcohol, coffee and stress
- 5** Keep your dinner **LIGHT** and **EARLY**
- 6** Smart **BEDDING** choices
- 7** Don't squirm, **DO SOMETHING** else

“Sleep, unfortunately, is not an optional lifestyle luxury. Sleep is a non-negotiable biological necessity. It is your life support system, and it is Mother Nature's best effort yet at immortality. I believe it is now time for us to reclaim our right to a full night of sleep and without embarrassment or that unfortunate stigma of laziness. And in doing so, we can be reunited with the most powerful elixir of life.”

Matthew Walker

(on TED Radio Hour)

Have a good night!

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