5 Steps To Better Sleep

If you've ever found yourself counting sheep into the wee hours, then you can take some small comfort from the fact that you're not alone.

Insomnia is plaguing more and more people each year and with the stresses of our daily lives, it's no surprise. For more than 75% of Americans polled by the National Sleep Foundation, getting a good night’s sleep feels more like a distant dream than a reality.

The good news is that enjoying a full and healthy night's sleep is easier than you might think. You can improve the quality and duration of your sleep without resorting to sleeping pills or other artificial sleep aids. All you need to start your journey towards better sleep are these five simple steps:

Establish a routine

Creating a consistent bedtime routine is one of the most important steps you can take towards getting a good night's sleep. Going to bed at the same time each night and getting up at the same time each morning is the first step towards establishing a consistent sleep pattern.

A successful sleep routine also involves reducing outside stimulants like television, computer work and exercise two to three hours before bed, and refraining from caffeine at least three hours before bedtime.

Create a peaceful sleeping environment

Achieving better sleep depends upon a relaxed, peaceful sleeping environment. For the best possible sleep, remove distractions such as televisions, stereos and computers from your bedroom. Keep your bedroom temperature cool. Gentle air circulation through an open window and fresh, clean bed linens also help to promote a good night's sleep.

Reduce stress

Thoughts of work, financial problems and family concerns can often prevent a good night's sleep. Try reducing stimulants, using aromatherapy, a warm bath or some deep breathing and relaxation exercises to induce sleep, reduce stress and decrease the anxiety that can cause insomnia.

Adjust your diet

Maintaining a balanced diet is also one of the keys to enjoying a regular and fulfilling night's sleep. A healthy diet assists the bodily functions necessary for sound sleep. If you aren't following a healthy pattern of eating, you may find that altering the balance of your diet will dramatically improve the quality and duration of your sleep.
**Use herbs or aromatherapy**

Aromatherapy candles or oils and herbal teas are just two natural sleep aids that can significantly improve your nightly sleep. A variety of herbs enjoy a long history of use in addressing the problem of insomnia and in helping to induce better sleep.

Try burning a calming aromatherapy candle or adding soothing essential oils to a warm bath to help your body and mind wind down before bed. You might also try sipping chamomile tea (an age-old sleep remedy) an hour or so before bed to prepare your body for the good night's sleep you've been dreaming about.

**The key to achieving better sleep**

The five simple steps outlined here represent the basic framework for establishing a pattern of better sleep and provide an excellent starting point if you find yourself amongst the growing band of people suffering from insomnia. The key to achieving better sleep in the long-term doesn't, as many people believe, lie in reaching for the sleeping pills, but lies in finding a natural solution that works for you.

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