

# Your Ideal Bedtime Routine

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Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read.

Reflecting my studies - Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology), Certificate of Sleep Psychology, Diploma of Health Science (Nutritional Medicine), Certificate 4 in Fitness - I have compiled the essentials of healthy sleep: and present them to you in 10 straightforward solutions.

The strategies improve sleep by reducing stress - so whether it's sleep, fatigue or burn out, this guide is for you.

As you know, stress is typically caused by conscious factors, like worries about work. Within the body, this is reflected in activation of the sympathetic nervous system.

However, imperative to know that de-stressing can be via conscious **or** unconscious factors, and is simply achieved by engaging the opposing system - the parasympathetic. In essence, the brain doesn't distinguish between the two - all it registers is a greater sense of calm, ease and tranquility.

Subsequently, you will not only sleep better, you will feel, think and function better - and this is my intention for you.

Olivia x

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# 1. Create a Sleep Sanctuary

Working, watching TV or being on laptop - you've heard it's bad, but do you know why? Highlighted in academic journal Behaviour Therapy, work-like activities in the bedroom disrupt the mental association that bed = rest; which is imperative, because rest = sleep. The more relaxation you engage in bed, the better. Note - sex is included here - go for gold!

In addition, scientific studies show these stimulatory activities keep your mind in a highly active state, reflected in fast, alpha brainwaves. In order to attain deep sleep, your brain needs to move to slow, delta brainwaves. The earlier you progress towards these slow waves, the earlier you sink into that restorative sleep - making you feel superhuman the next day.

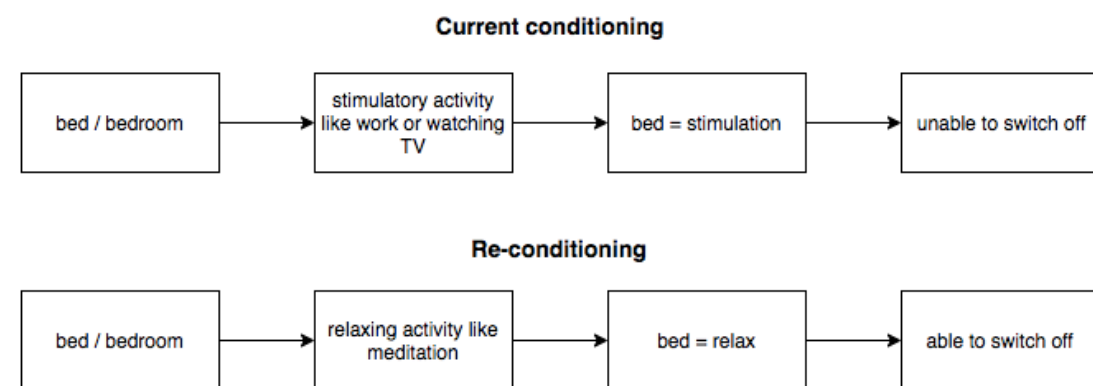
And if that wasn't enough, these devices also emit blue light (explained on the following page).

## Key take aways:

Remove TVs and laptops from the bedroom

Designate another area to do work outside of your bedroom, or if this is not possible, at least off your bed

Have sex, read and practice meditation instead



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## 2: Block Blue Light

Research in the Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism notes blue light delays melatonin production, the key hormone to make you feel sleepy by a whopping 90 minutes. This time is not made up later in the night, which means that you simply miss out on feeling tired early in the night, and more likely to wake though the evening too. The science here is that melatonin and cortisol oppose each other: high melatonin occurs when cortisol levels are low, and visa versa. When cortisol levels start to peak, typically around 3-4am, if you have not synthesised sufficient melatonin to maintain sleep you may wake up - and often in a flurry of thoughts and enough energy to run a marathon.

Blue light, as you probably know, is emitted from devices; however it's also imperative to realise street lights and ceiling lights also transmit it too - so switching off from your phone isn't going to be enough.

### Key Take Aways:

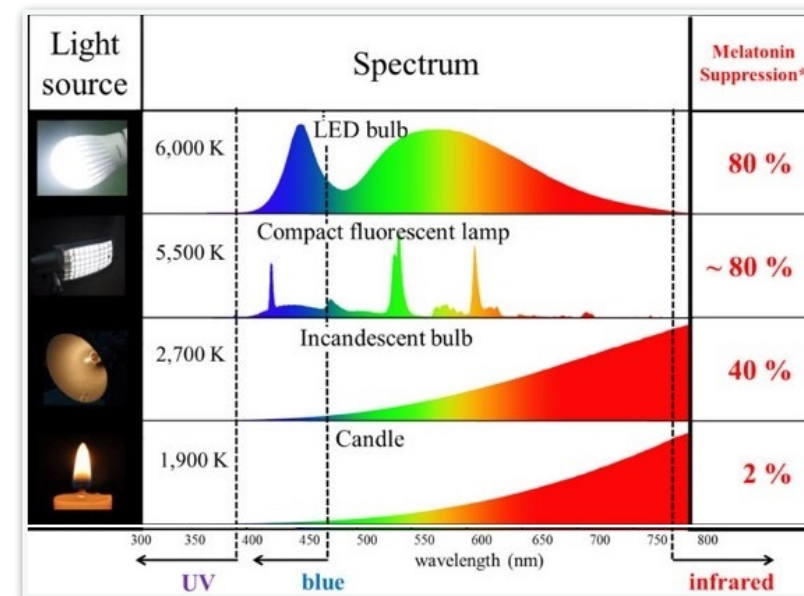
Wear a pair of 100% blue light blocking sunglasses

2 hours before bed

Turn on Night Mode on your phone

Install and turn on F.Lux for your laptop

Wear your eye mask upon falling asleep



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# 3. Set a Goodnight Alarm For Your Phone

Academic journal [BMC Public Health](#) found high phone usage correlates with mental health conditions including stress, anxiety and depression. Not only is it the constant comparison between your feed (and life) to those on your feed, it's also the perception that you could be disturbed at any time with late night emails.

Knowing it's too easy to simply forget about your good intentions when you're deep in an instagram scroll or finishing those last emails, make it easier by setting an alarm for 830pm (or whatever is reasonable for you) and label the alarm with WHY you will put your phone away - e.g. 'wake up fresh tomorrow' or 'feel energetic' or 'stick to new habits'.

Suggestions for alternative activities are on the following pages - stay tuned!

## Key Take Aways:

Set an alarm as to when you will get off your phone

Label the alarm with your key motivation

Actually follow the plan



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# 4: Diffuse Lavender and Sweet Orange Oil

Make it clear to your mind and body that it's time to unwind by leveraging grandma's best trick.

Research shows lavender tranquillises the body and mind, and likewise, academic studies support sweet orange as a natural sedative. Because of this, know that these oils are not just helpful for sleep - likewise, if you're having a stressful day, immersing yourself within the naturally calming properties of these ancient remedies will help you - even before you've practiced mindfulness techniques.

Not only is this my personal recommendation, but it's what supermodels Elle and Miranda do religiously as well - and we all know they look pretty damn good in the morning, right?

My recommendation is Oil Gardens Sleep Assist.

## **Key Take Aways:**

Diffuse the oil freely throughout the day

Pop a diffuser on after your alarm - it

welcomes you to your nightly sleep ritual





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# 5: Have an Evening Shower

Academic journal Sleep pinpoints approximately 45-60 minutes before sleep, a shower enhances relaxation of your muscles and promotes deep rest. The rapid decline of your core body temperature - experienced when emerging from a shower - is the driving factor - as it encourages melatonin synthesis (the hormone to make you sleepy). As a result, you go into deeper sleep faster, and as a result, you wake up more energised.

On a behavioural level, jumping in the shower means you are literally forced from your preceding activities, which may have been scrolling on instagram 'just one last time' after your alarm goes off.

If you are out late and are rushed for your evening routine, you may choose to (temporarily!) skip this step and simply move onto some of the shorter actions, which are following. If you become anxious about the timing of the shower, it defeats the purpose of relaxation! It's ok to alter on some days; however for ultimate results, shower (and engage the other steps) on a routine basis.

## **Key Take Aways:**

Keep the shower lukewarm

Have it no less than 30 minutes before your bedtime



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## 6: Drink Chamomile Tea

Particularly for those who are stressed, sleep deprived or find it hard to switch off, chamomile tea is for you: [Molecular Medicine Reports](#) highlights apigenin, a sedative property, activates the a calming neurotransmitter pathway in the brain - GABA. Interesting, this is the same one activated by sleeping pills, however chamomile tea has a much milder effect - and thus is safe for long term use, adults and children alike.

The tranquillising impact of chamomile tea are so powerful it's now used in clinical trials for generalised anxiety disorder - as outlined in [Journal of Society for Clinical Trials](#). In reducing mental rumination, it also helps you become more focused, centred and attentive - enjoy it instead of caffeinated tea or coffee for maximum productivity.

### **Key Take Aways:**

Drink chamomile tea straight after your shower

Opt for chamomile tea as your tea of choice in meetings / the office





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# 7: Take a Magnesium Supplement

As noted by researchers at Department of Family Medicine, University of Alberta, 500mg of magnesium in the evening has been shown to improve symptoms of insomnia, promote relaxation of mind and body and aid calmness.

Conversely, clinical trials published in Neuropharmacology demonstrate a lack of magnesium is correlated with anxiety and an exaggerated stress response within the brain (aka making a mountain out of a molehill).

Due to excessive stress, gut disorders, an imbalanced diet, alcohol, drugs and usage of pharmaceuticals, many of us have an impaired absorption of nutrients, including magnesium. As a result, sometimes a diet rich in magnesium - salmon, tuna and leafy greens - may not be enough.

Given your objective to be as tranquil in the evening as possible, I strongly encourage this supplement. Further, many magnesium supplements are teamed with sleep promoting ancient compounds such as valerian root, passionflower and lemon balm, which is essentially a doubly whammy for deep, quality sleep.

My recommendation for a sleep supplement is GoHealthy Go Magnesium Sleep

## Key Take Aways:

Buy and take a sleep supplement each night

- take it at the same time as your chamomile tea



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# 8. Practice Gratitude

Our rest is often disrupted by our need to do more, be more, give more. Although wanting to deliver everything you can is a beautiful trait, it's important to keep it in check - and make sure that first and foremost, you are giving to yourself first.

The nightly practice of gratitude enhances awareness of the goodness happening in your life already, lessening our need to rush through to the next day - which can often be felt as anxiety. Reflected by evidence published in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, written gratitude increases positivity plus overall wellbeing.

By placing this activity as one of the last of the day, you also take advantage of overnight memory encoding. Scientific research highlights you recall first and last elements of information more than the bits between - and therefore, by finishing the day on a positive note, you are more likely to remember it.

Finally, a regular practice of gratitude also lessens our belief that we need to keep striving in order to become happy, because we realise we already are.

## **Key Take Aways:**

Keep a gratitude journal and write three pieces each night

Feel free to do this in the morning too



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# 9. Meditate

A scientific review in [Frontiers of Neurology](#) of meditation identified it lessens anxiety, reduces cortisol (stress hormone) release, heightens sleepiness hormone melatonin by over 400% and can double the amount of deep sleep we attain, as noted in the table below. Remember that slow wave sleep is what we want: it's what makes us feel rested and rejuvenated.

Neurologically, evidence published in [Society of Neuroscience](#) outlines meditation changes the amygdala, the region in the brain to govern reactivity to stress. As a result, meditators are less reactive to negative experiences - so not only is it beneficial to calm down in the evening, but also, for our overall wellbeing.

Most meditation benefits are seen after 8 weeks, practicing for a minimum of 20 minutes per day, so make this your aim.

## Key Take Aways:

Practice meditation for 10 minutes, immediately before bed

I encourage trying the app Headspace - it's how I learned!

Use an eye mask during your meditation

Variable	Meditators	Non Meditators
Melatonin levels	300 pg ml	65pg ml
SWS: younger adults (30-39)	17.6%	11.3%
SWS: middle age (40-49)	11.3%	6.7%
SWS: older adults (50-60)	10.6%	3.9%

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# 10: Breathe Deep

Breathing activates our parasympathetic nervous system - aka the calming nervous system - which is exactly why you feel more tranquil after doing it. [This meta-analysis \(compilation\) of 15 scientific trials](#) across the globe found deep breathing a proven method to reduce anxiety and eliminate 'incessant mental chatter'. Further, psychologists in [Neurological Sciences](#) report it improves both conscious and unconscious stress - aka your thoughts as well as bodily signals such as high cortisol.

Fortunately, the beauty in this practice is it's simplicity: it can be done at any time, by anyone, in any place. All it requires is you to close your eyes, focus on the air entering and leaving your nostrils, and to simply be. Practice makes perfect here, so ideally engage deep breathing regularly, in times of stress and non-stress alike. In doing so, when you do become stressed, you trust you know how to do it properly - rather than becoming stressed by the activity itself!

Both for sleep and overall stress reduction - deep breathing is available to you.

## **Key Take Aways:**

Practice deep breathing each evening whilst you meditate

The more you do this, the more calm you will become,  
and easier you will get to sleep



Take a Breath.

# Your Action Plan



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# Your Action Plan

Ideally, follow steps 1-10 in that order - it's designed to be a routine.

Start with one or two of the actions this week -  
and once you've mastered those, add more elements.

Help me help you: research by [American Society of Training and Development](#)  
shows you're 65% more likely to achieve your goals if you have an accountability partner:  
tag me on instagram @oliviaarezzolo and I'll be that person!

Remember, you'll be sleeping all your life, so if you have a few nights which don't go to plan,  
it's completely ok. Just resume what you can the next night and keep moving forward.

Finally, in times of high stress, exercise the actions freely - they will be effective to reduce anxiety,  
exhaustion and burn out. Similarly, encourage others to do the same.

Thank you for your time.  
I look forward to seeing you progress,  
and trust you will.

Olivia x

