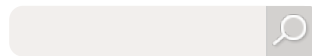




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Diet & Health

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[Homepage](#) > [Diet & Health](#) > [Health](#)

## 7 Tricks to Help You Sleep Like a Baby

It's time to go back to the basics.

BY AMANDA HAWKINS



Getting ready for bed is all about rituals and signaling your body that it's time for sleep. [Jacob Teitelbaum](#), M.D., author, and national health and wellness expert, shares his absolute must-try things to do all day to get a fulfilling sleep all night.

### 1. Create a routine.

Doing the same thing night after night really helps get your body ready for sleep. Whether your evening ritual includes a small [glass of a wine](#) and a chapter from your favorite book, or an evening walk with your dog, it's vital to give yourself about 30 minutes at night to wind down and tell you body and brain that "hey, it's time for sleeping now." (Just avoid those Netflix marathons — too much [light right before bed](#) has been linked to obesity, insomnia, and depression.)

### 2. Say "yes" to sunshine.

Take a few minutes each day to walk around the block or simply sit outside. It's crucial for our brain to be in the sun at some point during the day so it can set our internal clocks — and know when it's time to go to bed later. This also counteracts the need to go into hibernation mode, so if you're feeling a little sleepy during the day, step

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outside for an instant boost.

### 3. Exercise earlier.

Working out at night is totally fine, just try to avoid the gym at least an hour before bedtime. Exercise during the day makes it easier for you to sleep at night, but spiking your heart rate too close to bedtime will keep you tossing and turning. One study found that exercising first thing in the morning actually [leads to better sleep](#) at night, as well as reduced blood pressure.

### 4. Watch what you eat.

When you eat, gravity is your friend — it helps pull the food toward your stomach for digestion. However, if you chow down on a huge meal right before bed, and then lie down to sleep, the results may be painful (think acid reflux).

If you need a small snack just before bedtime, make it a high protein snack that will keep your blood sugar stable, as opposed to a high-carb snack that can wake you up in the middle of the night. Teitelbaum recommends sliced meat and cheese, a [handful of nuts](#), or a hard boiled egg.

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### 5. Prepare a bath.

One of Teitelbaum's favorite nightly rituals is taking a nice warm bath. And he suggests adding a few scoops of magnesium salts, which will help relax your muscles. A few drops of [lavender](#) oil can also [slow heart rate](#) and blood pressure, and put you in a relaxed state. If baths aren't your thing, add some to your pillow to calm you before bed.

### 6. Put your feet up.

In the same way that gravity pulls your food down for digestion, it pulls liquids down toward your legs. So, raise your feet up slightly at night. This helps cut down on those annoying post-midnight bathroom visits.

### 7. Consider taking melatonin.

If you find that it takes you a long time to fall asleep, try a dose of melatonin. The hormone signals our sleep cycle, and small dosages can help decrease the amount of time it takes you to doze off, as well as improve your overall quality of sleep.

However, you don't need a huge amount. "Half a milligram of melatonin gives you all the benefits you need," says Teitelbaum. Speak with your doctor before starting any sort of medication, as he or she can help you with the correct dosage and right time to take it each night.

**TELL US: What are your tricks for getting a good night's sleep?**

**NEXT: [17 Ways You're Sleeping Wrong](#) »**

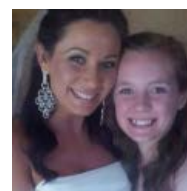
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