

Improve Your Sleep Naturally

☆ A Guide That Will Help Transform Your Sleep
From Z to Zzz ☆



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Hello Beautiful,

It's Siobhan here, and I'm so pleased that you decided to download this free gift from my heart to yours.

In this ebook, you will find out what may be at the root cause of your sleeping problems, and I will take you through the exact action steps that you can take to improve your sleep naturally, no sleeping pills involved, starting tonight.

Why am I gifting you this ebook for free? Because I want this information to be accessible to anyone who's dealing with sleeping problems. I know how debilitating it can be if you or a loved one are experiencing difficulty sleeping.

If you have ever experienced a period in your life where you had difficulty falling or staying asleep, you probably know how frustrating and exhausting it can be.

For example, when you're sleep-deprived, you're more likely to take things personal. You may experience mood swings, tear up easily, have intense sugar cravings, low energy, feel like you need a stimulant 'just to get going'... When you're exhausted, it becomes much harder to handle what life throws your way. You tend to rather see the downside of things. And on top of that, [a lack of sleep can weaken your immune system](#), making it more likely that you get sick more often, and stay sick longer.

You get the picture. Sleep is life. I really wish everyone would be able to get a peaceful, restorative sleep at night. The world would be so different.

Sleep is what allows us to survive — and thrive. In all areas of life.

A Brief History Of My Sleep, Disrupted

A couple of years ago, I found myself in a place where I had developed such severe insomnia that some nights I barely managed to get 2 hours of sleep. After years of chronic stress, I was at my lowest point. I was anxious, depressed, sleep-deprived and very sick. Luckily though, I had a close relationship with the Internet, where after some research I found lots of amazing information, got access to the most amazing mentors and online communities, enrolled in online courses, and came across holistic health pioneers and paradigm breakers, all of whom have helped me to be where I am today — a strong and more confident woman with a growing positive outlook on life.

The downward spiral that ultimately led to my darkest period in life, started when I went to University when I was 18. As soon as I had a place of my own (and discovered student nightlife), I felt like I could finally be myself and start organizing my life the way I wanted to. And that included being a night hawk.

Throughout my first 3 years at University, I created a lifestyle where I'd stay up until 3am — and never get out of bed before midday. I struggled with physical and mental health issues. I suffered from severe eczema, anxiety and depression and I found that only when it was dark outside and everyone else was asleep, I could finally be at peace.

But over time, it became impossible for me to fall sleep before 3am, even when I had class at 8 in the morning. On top of that, after 3 years of this nightly lifestyle, my eczema had gotten so bad that I couldn't sleep because my skin was so sore and itchy.

I realized something had to change.

I started doing research about natural remedies that would help me sleep better. At that time, I was still struggling with anxiety, depression, emotional binge eating and drinking.

It would only be until I decided to leave everything behind for a year-long trip throughout Australia and New Zealand, that things really started to change. I met my boyfriend, who saw my struggle but also recognized my inner power, and he encouraged me to keep doing what I believed in.

Finally, my healing process started to accelerate. We went back to Belgium and we rented a little apartment where I created my own little safe haven. **I finally found some peace and a place where I could take my time to heal.**

I signed up for Elwin Robinson's [Complete Detox Academy](#), and after some weeks I started to get **real sustainable results for the first time ever**. I was stunned. This was nothing like a steroid cream fix, I could notice my skin healing and becoming stronger from the inside out, without the use of any steroids.

What started as a search for a sustainable solution to clear up my eczema soon became the landmark starting point for a long healing process in which I resolved many physical and mental health issues that I'd been dealing with for most of my life.

Not only my eczema started to disappear, I noticed that my digestion improved, my anxiety and depression slowly tapered off, I didn't suffer from mysterious headaches and nose-bleeds anymore, my energy and willpower increased, my sugar-cravings subsided, and the best side effect of all? Was that *I finally slept better*.

A whole new world opened up before me. It felt as if I was waking up from years and years of foggy darkness.

I finally felt like I could be myself, that I belonged in this world.

And I know that is what a great restorative sleep can do for you, too.

Feeling good about yourself starts with a deep and restful sleep.

When you sleep well, you feel more in alignment. You feel more positive about life, you have more energy, drive, and motivation, you find it easier to deal with stressful situations, you have greater immunity, and you simply feel more 'like yourself'.

Below, I will outline the basics of what may be at the root cause of your sleeping problems. I will explain how the choices you make during the day can affect the quality of your sleep at night — and I will give you the exact action steps that you can take to improve your sleep, so that you too can finally find some peace at night.

Much love + healing vibes your way,

Siobhan x

1

Why We Don't Sleep

“Now I see the secret of making the best person: it is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth.”

– *Walt Whitman*



A Great Night's Sleep Starts the Moment You Wake Up

One of the reasons why people have trouble falling or staying asleep, is that they only start preparing for the night right before they go to bed.

But here's the thing.

During the day, your hormones go up and down in natural cycles. There's a continually changing balance between hormones like cortisol, ghrelin, insulin, glucagon, melatonin, estrogen, testosterone, etc. For many of us though, **our hormonal curves are out of balance** due to stress, a poor diet, lack of sleep, lack of daylight exposure and an overexposure to blue light frequencies at night, use of medication, and endocrine disrupting chemicals entering our bloodstream and tissues.

The Cortisol Curve

Just like everything else that naturally occurs in your body, cortisol is there because it has an important function to fulfill. **Healthy cortisol levels** will create steady energy throughout the day and will maintain a healthy endocrine and immune system function.

However, for many of us cortisol (fight-or-flight hormone) levels have gone rogue, due to a fast-paced lifestyle that constantly demands our attention and alertness. But this is not how we're designed to be. We were designed to only release high levels of cortisol when we encountered a life-threatening situation like a dangerous predator for example. In this case, the acute release of cortisol would divert all our energy to our muscles, allowing us to run away as fast as possible. This genius system was critical to our survival.

Today however, we don't live in the jungle or savanna anymore. Instead, we live in safe modern **urban spaces**, with very little threatening situations. That is not to say that these safe urban space aren't giving us stress. Constant noise, traffic, impressions, pollution, work pres-

sure, high expectations, depressing world news, lack of nature, and so on, make us all **chronically stressed**.

When we're stressed, our bodies release **adrenaline**, which is designed to protect us from danger as it enables us to get up in a second and run away fast. However, when you're constantly stressed, your body thinks there's lurking danger *everywhere all the time*, so we're constantly releasing adrenaline. But our bodies aren't designed to constantly process adrenaline. Chronically elevated levels of adrenaline overstimulate our adrenal system, making us feel tired but wired, leaving us unable to relax, and interfering with falling and staying asleep. This constant adrenal overstimulation can over time lead to all sorts of serious *disease*, including sleeping problems.

In '**The Cortisol Curve**', an online article published at [DrFrankLipman.com](https://www.drfranklipman.com), Dr. Sara Gottfried explains how "[h]igh cortisol levels wreak havoc over time, deplete your happy brain chemicals like serotonin, rob your sleep, and make you store fat, especially in your belly. High cortisol is likewise linked to depression and food addiction." Imbalances can also lead to inflammation and thyroid issues. But Gottfried emphasizes that these problems can be fixed. And though restoring a smooth cortisol curve takes a little time and effort, the results are well worth it.'

Are your cortisol levels out of balance?

Ideally, your cortisol level is highest when you wake up, and then it gradually decreases during the day. This means you feel awake within 30 minutes after waking up, and during the afternoon you gradually feel like slowing down. By the evening, your levels of cortisol reach their lowest point, making you feel relaxed and ready to wind down.

If you experience trouble waking up, feel like you have to drag yourself out of bed, always need a couple of hours before you finally start to feel ready for the day — only to find your-

self finally 'waking up' when evening comes? These may be signs that your cortisol is spiking and dropping at the wrong times.

But it's possible to bring back balance and restore your nervous system.

To begin with, there are two main areas you want to have a look at, i.e. diet and stress management.

Eat For Optimum Sleep

Nutrition Tip #1: Eating Carbs In The Evening Can Improve Your Sleep

In ['The Cortisol Curve'](#), endocrinologist Alan Christianson explains how eating some healthy carbs in the evening can help lower cortisol production during the night:

'Imagine a seesaw: higher-carb meals drop the cortisol, and lower-carb meals allow the cortisol to stay higher. This is because carbs elevate blood sugar, so the pancreas makes more insulin to manage that increase. Insulin decreases cortisol output. As blood sugar goes up, cortisol gets pushed down. (...) **When you're too low on carbs, you raise cortisol because the muscles are being pulled apart for that glucose. In turn, that elevates cortisol even more, and that can really be a problem in the evening.'**

With carbs, we don't mean sugar, bread, or pasta. Good sources of healthy carbs are (sweet) potatoe, pumpkin, banana, mango, and gluten-free grains like oats, quinoa, and buckwheat.

You'll learn more about how you can optimize your diet in chapter 3.

How to Relax

When you experience stress — whether it's physical, mental or emotional — your cortisol levels go up. This natural fight-or-flight mechanism is designed to protect you from real dangers. But often, what stresses us out — traffic, deadlines, expectations, household chaos — are no real 'dangers' at all. Yet we experience them as such, day in and day out.

I really had to learn to change my **perspective on stressful situations**. Instead of stressing out over the same thing every day (overcrowded trains, unfriendly customers, a busy schedule), I decided to change my perspective and see these situations as learning experiences. Stressing out about it isn't helping me in any way. Accepting it, observing it, practicing breathing meditations and learning to deal with it, are.

Next time you find yourself stressing out over something, try this: **focus on your breath**. How does it feel, are you breathing fast, from the chest? Try to slow down and breathe from your belly instead. Put your hands on your belly and feel it gently expand with every breath you take. Did you know that when you focus on your breath, your parasympathetic, that is your **rest & recovery nervous system**, automatically activates? When this happens, your cortisol levels drop, making you calmer quicker.

Next time you feel that something or someone stresses you out:

- 1. ZOOM IN.** Notice how this person or situation makes you feel. Check in with yourself. What sensations do you have, where in your body can you locate them?
- 2. ZOOM OUT.** Notice how the stress makes you feel. Zoom out. Are these feelings that you experience useful for you, or would you rather continue your day feeling differently?
- 3. BREATHE.** Close your eyes for a minute and concentrate on breathing from your belly. Breathe in for 4 heartbeats, hold your breath for 7 heartbeats and breathe out for 8 heartbeats. Repeat 3 times or until you feel calm. Tip: if you practice this every day, even when

you're not in a stressful situation, it will strengthen your stress-response muscle for when you do feel stressed.

4. MOVE. Moving the stress out of your body can be super effective. You can go for more gentle movement like stretching or yoga, or you can shake off the anger/ frustration by going for a walk outside, jumping, running up stairs (a good one to do at work), or doing a really weird impro dance that will help you get rid of any nasty feelings.

5. RETURN. Come back to the situation with more peace and perspective ♥

After this exercise, give yourself 5 minutes to recenter yourself. Treat yourself with a cup of your favourite herbal tea. Hug someone, call a friend to vent about what just happened, write down your thoughts in a journal... Anything that feels right for you. Remember it's always better to take some time off until you feel better than to push yourself and your feelings aside, which will only make you feel even more unseen and burnt out.

We will discuss more helpful techniques, as well as some effective stress-lowering herbs and supplements in chapter 3, 'How to Organize Your Day So You'll Get the Most Out of Your Day — And Night'.

Other Causes of Disturbed Sleep (via [Medical Medium](#))

While elevated cortisol levels is one of the leading causes why people have trouble sleeping, there are a myriad of other reasons that may be at the root of your sleeplessness. When you have already incorporated the techniques described above for a couple of months, but you still experience sleeping problems, there may be something else that needs fixing. If you're interested to find out more about underlying causes of sleeplessness, I highly recommend reading the book *Medical Medium: Secrets Behind Chronic and Mystery Illness and How to Finally Heal* by Anthony William.

1. AN OVERBURDENED LIVER

During the night, your liver goes into detox mode. As you sleep, it will clean up any toxic debris that's stuck inside. However, if your liver is sluggish due to a poor diet, or if your liver has become overloaded with toxic waste, it will have a hard time cleansing your system, resulting in disrupted sleep.

2. VIRAL OVERLOAD

Besides from overburdening the liver, viruses can also keep you awake at night because they excrete neurotoxins, which can interfere with your ability to fall (back) to sleep.

3. HEAVY METAL TOXICITY

Heavy metals provide one of the major food sources for viruses, allowing them to grow stronger, thus producing more toxic waste, which will keep you ever more awake at night.

4. DIGESTIVE ISSUES

Digestive tract sensitivities can interfere with your sleep as food moves through your intestines and triggers nerve endings that are attached to your intestinal lining.

5. SLEEP APNEA

Sleep apnea can be caused by many different things, like sinus problems or being overweight. According to the Medical Medium, sleep apnea also has a third cause, not yet known by mainstream medical communities, and that is sleep apnea caused by neurological issues. This happens when the brain sends "incorrect messages to the vagus and phrenic nerves using electrical impulses and neurotransmitters that are being weakened or interrupted by toxic heavy metals or viral neurotoxins." (via [Medical Medium](#))

6. ADRENAL EXHAUSTION

A stressful lifestyle can lead to adrenal exhaustion, also known as 'burnout'. This happens when the body has spent a lot of time in fight-or-flight mode, causing the adrenal glands to constantly pump adrenaline into the bloodstream. This is very detrimental to your health and ultimately leads to feeling exhausted, tired yet wired, unhealthy cravings, frustrated, irritable and having trouble falling or staying asleep.

7. TRAUMA, STRESS & ANXIETY

Traumatic experiences, unmanaged stress and feelings of anxiety can also keep you awake. The causes and treatments for these are highly individual, so I recommend you consult a professional who can work through these issues together with you.

2

How To Wake Up

“When you arise in the morning,
think of what a precious privilege it
is to be alive – to breathe, to think,
to enjoy, to love.”

– Marcus Aurelius



Let's go back to where it all begins.

Remember how I explained that the quality of your sleep is affected by the choices you make during the day?

When your cortisol levels are in balance, you typically feel awake and ready for the day within 30 minutes after waking up. Your energy levels are balanced throughout the rest of the day, and then slowly taper off towards the evening.

If that sounds great but it's not (yet) where you're at right now...

Some tips to increase your energy naturally:

Experiment with waking up every day at the same time. If you can, try to follow the cycle of the Sun, i.e. lie down when the sun sets, and rise together with the sun. This protocol will help your body realign with the Earth's circadian rhythm. Of course, when you live in a place where it gets dark early, you may not want to follow this protocol, but it's a good guideline to keep in mind.

Try to **avoid bright light exposure at night**, and consider low red light lamps instead. A [himalayan salt lamp](#) is a great option for evening lighting, plus at the same time it purifies the air, it helps reduce electrosmog, and generally has a calming and soothing effect.

During the day, **go outside as much as possible**, and soak up some sunlight. Getting fresh air and sunlight straight onto your skin will oxygenate your blood, boost your mood, and allow your body to realign with the rhythm of nature.

In an interview on the [Rich Roll Podcast](#), Shawn Stevenson explains how we all have light receptors in our bodies that register the light coming in. **When we get those receptors adjusted to the natural cycle of light, our body's rhythm, and with it our energy and stamina, will get restored too.**

If you have ever gone on a camping trip, you may have noticed that when you sleep outside in nature, after a couple of days you naturally start to wind down as it gets dark, and wake up as the sun rises. That's how powerful reconnecting with nature really is — it can reset your bioclock in just a couple of days. Going on a camping trip is probably the most effective and budget-friendly way to reset your biological clock quickly, and with minimum effort.

Besides reconnecting with your natural rhythm, how you choose to spend your mornings also has an impact on the quality of your sleep.

This 3-step revitalizing morning routine will help you kick-start your day:

1. Hydrate

During the night, your body goes into rest & repair mode. As you sleep, your cells and organs eliminate waste, and repair and regenerate tissue.

As you wake up, this **cellular and organic waste** will stick around in your digestive tract.

That's why drinking water first thing in the morning is such an effective detox strategy. If the first thing you consume right after you wake up is a tall glass of fresh spring water with a splash of fresh lemon or lime juice, your body will thank you for it!

The lemon and water will support your body to **flush out toxins, clear your digestive tract, boost your metabolism, and alkalize and rehydrate your organs**. The lemon will also stimulate the production of hydrochloric acid in your stomach, which will help your body digest breakfast smoothly.

Now what if you really crave that coffee in the morning and can't imagine life without it? Then try drinking the water first thing, 15 to 30 minutes before you would normally have

your coffee or tea. This will give your body some time to cleanse and rehydrate first before it gets stimulated and dehydrated by the caffeine.

2. Have Quality Time With Yourself First

Try to make some time for yourself in the morning, even if it's just 5 minutes. I know mothers with big families who set their alarm half an hour before everyone else wakes up so that they are sure to get at least 30 minutes of quiet time with themselves first.

Do something in the morning that gives you some **peace and perspective** before you engage with your to-do list. This may be something like yoga, meditation, a walk in the forest, or simply enjoying a cup of tea while setting your intentions for the day.

For example, instead of taking the bus to work, I choose to walk the distance while I listen to my favourite podcast. I get to move, I get fresh air, I get to enjoy some early morning light, and listening to an inspiring talk gives me a positive start to the day.

Making some time for yourself in the morning allows you to create some space in your head and to get perspective before you start giving energy to other people around you. **Do something that makes you happy**, however small or simple it may seem.

3. Boost Your Breakfast

Whatever you choose to eat for breakfast will set your taste palate for the rest of the day.

For example, if you have a coffee and croissant for breakfast, you will notice that it's much harder to stay away from sugar and other stimulants for the rest of the day. Your body will try to compensate for the **blood sugar** spike-and-drop for the rest of the day, which will make it very hard to stay away from coffee, cigarettes, sugar, pastries, or any other stimulant you feel drawn to.

Especially if you're a sensitive person, consuming **stimulants** will undoubtedly keep you awake at night. Cutting back on stimulants can mean a world of difference.

Are you ready to have more, real energy again, without relying on a stimulant to keep you going?

As a challenge, try having a **green smoothie** for breakfast for a week or so and notice how you feel and how your cravings change. Smoothies are super quick and easy to make, they're super delicious and they *burst* with vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, protein and healthy fats. Add in anything you fancy — experiment with different greens like kale, spinach, and purslane; fruits like frozen berries, peaches, or persimmons; seeds like chia, flax, or pumpkin seeds; and superfoods like barley grass juice powder, spirulina, maca, acai, and so on. Pro tip: sometimes, simple is best.



TROPICAL GREEN BREAKFAST SMOOTHIE (SERVES 2)

INGREDIENTS

- a handful of leafy greens (like spinach, kale, chard, purslane...)
- 3 heaping tbsp of hemp seeds
- 1 tbsp flax seeds

- 1 tsp maca (optional)
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 2 mangos
- 2 passion fruits
- juice of 1 orange
- some fresh turmeric
- spring water, as desired

EQUIPMENT

A high-speed blender

INSTRUCTIONS

Throw all ingredients in your blender in the order listed, blend for about 10 seconds on high speed, and enjoy! You can also take your smoothie with you on the go in a big glass jar.

3

Nourish Yourself — You Are Worth The Effort

“Nourishing yourself in a way that helps you blossom in the direction you want to go is attainable, and you are worth the effort.”

— Deborah Day



Go Outside & Soak Up Some Sunshine

The quality of your sleep is closely linked to the amount and intensity of natural light you're exposed to throughout the day.

The more you expose yourself (especially your eyes and skin) directly to natural sunlight, the more you will get realigned with your biorhythm.

In [How the Cycles of Light and Darkness Affect Your Health and Wellbeing](#), Dr. Mercola interviews health entrepreneur Dan Pardi about the effects of light exposure on sleep. He explains the impact of artificial light on your health, and how indoor light exposure causes our biorhythms to go out of sync:

*'Most people in Western societies spend the larger portion of each day indoors, which essentially puts you in a state of "light deficiency." In terms of light intensity, outdoor light is far more intense than indoor light. Light intensity is measured in lux units, and on any given day, the outdoor lux units will be around 100,000 at noon. Indoors, the typical average is somewhere between 100 to 2,000 lux units—basically two orders of magnitude less. **"We're not getting enough bright light exposure during the day, and then in the evening, we're getting too much artificial light exposure.** Both of those have the consequence of causing our rhythms to get out of sync," Pardi says.*

(...)

[E]ven just going outside for half an hour at lunch time can provide you with the majority of anchoring light you need to maintain a healthy circadian rhythm. The ideal time to go outdoors is right around solar noon but any time during daylight hours is useful.'

It is important to know that the amount of lux units of indoor lighting are big enough to interfere with our own **melatonin** (sleep hormone) production at night.

So while it is a good idea to expose yourself to a decent amount of natural light during the day, it is equally important that you limit your exposure to artificial light in the evening so that your body understands it's nighttime, and can start producing melatonin.

When you have a healthy melatonin production, you'll be able to fall and stay asleep much easier.

Move

Run, hike, cycle, swim, dance, jump... **Find an activity that you enjoy.** If you struggle with **motivation**, sign up for a course, class, or gym membership and make it a habit to go regularly. When you set goals and/ or invest your money into something, you're less likely to put it off.

Many people can only make time for **exercise in the evening**, but then I hear that exercising impacts their sleep rather negatively. Sometimes, this is because when you do strenuous exercise like running or lifting weights, you're pumping up some good levels of dopamine and cortisol, which will leave you feeling all hyped up and not being able to wind down.

If your goal is to improve your sleep, try doing the heavier kinds of exercise earlier in the day and the lighter exercise later in the day. This will help rebalance your cortisol levels, and increase your energy during the day while encouraging relaxation at night.

Doing **heavier exercise** that increases your heart rate earlier in the day, will help rebalance cortisol and blood sugar, which in turn will give you more energy, stamina and focus during the rest of the day.

On the other hand, more **gentle exercise** towards the evening, like walking, stretching, or yoga will help to lower heart rate and cortisol, thus relaxing your body and mind and promoting a sounder sleep.

Breathe & Meditate

‘Whenever I feel blue, I start breathing again.’

— L. Frank Baum

Breathing and meditation are two very powerful practices that promote relaxation and recovery.

Here's a simple 3-step breathing meditation you can practice anywhere:

- 1. Sit down somewhere you feel comfortable.** Relax your shoulders and put your hands on your knees with palms upwards. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing — are you breathing from your chest or are you breathing from your belly?
- 2. Place your hands on your belly** and feel it expand as you breathe in through your nose for 4 heartbeats — hold your breath for 7 heartbeats — and exhale through your mouth for 8 heartbeats. Repeat 3 times.
- 3. As you do the exercise, focus on your breath.** Every time your mind wanders off, notice it — don't judge — and just realign with the rhythm of your breath.

Check Your Diet

Foods To Avoid

#1 PROCESSED FOODS

Processed foods like industrially prepared meals, refined oils and flours, white table salt, condiments and prepackaged snacks often contain harmful additives and have little nutritional value.

These 'foods' often contain so-called '**excitotoxins**'. Excitotoxins are neurotoxic compounds that are frequently added to industrially processed foods to 'enhance' flavour and texture. These include MSG, aspartame, and hydrolyzed vegetable protein and they are labeled under different names such as:

- Glutamic Acid (E 620)
- Glutamate (E 620)
- Monosodium Glutamate (E 621)
- Monopotassium Glutamate (E 622)
- Calcium Glutamate (E 623)
- Monoammonium Glutamate (E 624)
- Magnesium Glutamate (E 625)
- Natrium Glutamate
- Yeast Extract
- Anything "hydrolyzed"
- Any "hydrolyzed protein"
- Calcium Caseinate
- Sodium Caseinate
- Yeast Food
- Yeast Nutrient
- Autolyzed Yeast
- Gelatin
- Textured Protein
- Soy Protein
- Soy Protein Concentrate
- Soy Protein Isolate
- Whey Protein
- Whey Protein Concentrate
- Whey Protein Isolate
- Anything "...protein"
- Vetsin

[... and many many more!](#) If you suffer from any kind of dis-ease, I strongly recommend you quit consuming any excitotoxins. It will be a huge game changer for your health!

If you eat a wholefoods diet and avoid industrially processed foods, you'll massively decrease your neurotoxic food intake.

In an online article published on joyfulaging.com, Dr. Russell L. Blaylock, MD and author of *Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills*, explains what excitotoxins are and how they cause harm to your cells:

*[Excitotoxins] are substances, usually amino acids, that react with specialized receptors in the brain in such a way as to lead to **destruction of certain types of brain cells**. Glutamate is one of the more commonly known excitotoxins. MSG is the sodium salt of glutamate. This amino acid is a normal neurotransmitter in the brain. In fact, it is the most commonly used neurotransmitter by the brain. Defenders of MSG and aspartame use, often say: "How could a substance that is used normally by the brain cause harm?" This is because, glutamate, as a neurotransmitter, is used by the brain only in very, very small concentrations - no more than 8 to 12ug. When the concentration of this transmitter rises above this level, the neurons begin to fire abnormally. At higher concentrations, the cells undergo a specialized process of cell death."*

#2 SUGAR

If you are trying to live a healthier life, ditching refined sugars may be the hardest yet most rewarding decision you will ever make.

When you avoid eating sugar, not only will whole foods start to taste much better, but your **blood sugar** will stabilize too! Meaning: no more mood swings, irritability, afternoon dips, sugar cravings and constant tiredness — while more real energy, stability, joy, endurance, and a more peaceful sleep.

Not ready yet to give up on sugar? Start with replacing beet and cane sugar for less processed **alternatives** like lucuma, coconut sugar, dates, yacon syrup, maple syrup, or raw sustainably sourced honey.

You can also work on stabilizing your blood sugar by making sure you get high **quality protein** from wholefood sources like leafy greens, fruits and vegetables, barley grass juice powder, hemp seeds and pumpkin seeds.

#3 STIMULANTS

Coffee, alcohol, green tea, chocolate and excitotoxins like MSG and aspartame are real sleep-killers. As their names suggest, 'stimulants' and 'excitotoxins' stimulate and overexcite your adrenals, depleting your **adrenal energy** and increasing your blood **cortisol** levels, making you feel irritable, moody, and exhausted. Just like quitting sugar, giving up stimulants can be very hard to do on your own, especially if you're going on your reserves already (been there!). So seek help from a professional, get support from like-minded people or connect with someone who has successfully banned the stimulants from his or her life already. [Get support — and get inspired!](#) *YOU CAN DO THIS.*

#4 CHILI PEPPERS

Perhaps not many people are aware of the effects spicy foods can have on sleep. Chili peppers contain a compound called **capsaicin**, which elevates your body temperature, making it a potential sleep disrupter.

An elevated **body temperature** will keep you awake longer and may cause difficulties in staying asleep — especially if you already have a history of sleeping problems.

So towards the evening, try eating more 'cooling' foods like fruits and vegetables.

Foods To Include

#1 ADAPTOGENS

Adaptogens are a great means for anyone who is looking to improve their **energy** and **sleep quality**. Unlike some other traditionally used herbs, adaptogenic plants do not interfere with other herbs and medications (like St. John's Wort), and they have no side effects — meaning that they aren't stimulating (like guarana), nor will they make you feel drowsy (like valerian). They are highly effective, though, when it comes to helping you get in touch with your vibrant self again.

Regularly consuming adaptogens will boost your **immune system** and increase your adaptability and **resilience** in stressful situations.

Some of my favourite adaptogenic **herbs for managing stress** are maca, ashwagandha, rhodiola, holy basil, and this very effective blend from Lion Heart Herbs called [Serenity](#).

Serenity tea is a powdered Taoist tonic herb tea blend made from polygala, asparagus root, ophiopogon, reishi, gynostemma, albizzia flower, biota seed, poria, rhodiola and licorice. Drink one cup daily to get noticeable effects.

#2 L-TRYPTOPHAN

L-Tryptophan is an essential amino acid. This means that your body can't make it, but has to obtain it from food sources.

This amino acid is the precursor of **5-HTP**, which then gets converted into **serotonin** and **melatonin**, two neurotransmitters that are essential for sleep and relaxation.

Plant foods that contain l-tryptophan with cofactors are pumpkin seeds, bananas, leafy greens, mushrooms and sea vegetables.

If you have difficulty absorbing nutrients from food, taking a high-quality supplement with L-Tryptophan may be helpful for you. But remember, always consult a doctor before you start taking supplements.

#3 CARBS

In the first chapter of this book, I explained how eating quality carbohydrates can help lower **cortisol**. Carbs elevate blood sugar, thus stimulating the pancreas to produce more insulin. This increase in **insulin** production results in a decrease in cortisol output.

Some great food sources of healthy carbs are:

- (Sweet) potatoes
- Root vegetables
- Squash
- Gluten-free grains like buckwheat, millet, oats, and quinoa
- Fruits like avocados, mangos, bananas, apricots and berries

#4 MAGNESIUM

'Magnesium is the most commonly deficient, overlooked and unappreciated mineral in the world. It's also the most crucial for us to have in order for us to experience abundant energy. Magnesium is involved in over 300 different enzymatic processes in the body. Most importantly, magnesium is crucial in the process of manufacturing the all-important energy molecule (...) ATP. Without magnesium, production of ATP grinds almost to a halt, and you feel exhausted.' (From [The New Easy Exhaustion Cure](#))

Magnesium is a key mineral involved in so many important processes in your body that we can't risk being deficient in it. If you have trouble **sleeping**, find it hard to relax, have difficulty dealing with **stress** and have low **energy**, chances are very high that you are deficient in magnesium.

Fortunately, you can solve this by eating more magnesium-rich foods, including:

- Leafy greens: spinach, chard, purslane, watercress, beet greens;
- Sea vegetables: nori, wakame, arame, dulse;
- Nuts and seeds: pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, quinoa, cashews;
- And tonic herbs.

However, even when you're eating a diet rich in the foods listed above, I'd still recommend supplementing with **transdermal magnesium** like magnesium oil spray or by having a bath with magnesium chloride or magnesium sulphate flakes once or twice a week. You can't really overdo it, since your body will excrete what it doesn't need.

#5 FRESH SPRING WATER

It's so important to make sure you stay hydrated throughout the day. Drinking at least 1.5 litres of [fresh spring water](#) will enable your body to **flush out toxins**, limiting cellular stress. If you often find yourself waking up during the night with the urge to pee, it's best to avoid drinking fluids at least 2h prior to bedtime.

#6 FOODS THAT HELP RESTORE SLEEP

In general: if you eat a healthy **wholefoods plant-based diet**, avoid stimulants, optimize your body's ability to release and eliminate toxins, find your own way to deal with stress, and restore your circadian rhythm, your body will naturally heal and restore itself.

But while you're still in the process of healing, here's some **nutrient-dense foods** that are specifically known for improving sleep quality:

1. *Walnuts, purslane, tart cherries & flax seeds*

These are some of the few foods that contain bioavailable melatonin, the hormone that is of crucial importance for a healthy, qualitative sleep.

2. Lemons, limes, barley grass juice, dulse, cilantro, leafy greens, artichokes, sprouts, radishes

These foods are great detoxifiers, which will help your body to effectively eliminate waste. And the cleaner and healthier your body, the better you will sleep.

3. Leafy greens: kale, chard, parsley, purslane, spinach, watercress, etc.

Leafy greens are high in minerals calcium and magnesium, which are both essential for a healthy sleep. Magnesium supports relaxation of the muscles and nervous system, and calcium helps the brain use tryptophan, which is important for the production of melatonin.

4. Mangoes, bananas, avocado, chickpeas & almonds

Good sources of vitamin B6 & magnesium, which help you relax and increase production of melatonin at night.

5. Chamomile, passionflower, lemon balm, and three tulsi tea

These herbal teas promote relaxation and sleepiness. Best to drink these at least 2h before bedtime to avoid waking up with a full bladder.

4

Your Evening Routine Outline

“When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life.”

– Jean Shinoda Bolen



By now, you have all the information you need to start improving your sleep with big leaps forward!

However, I know all this information can be a bit overwhelming. Where do you start? What are the basics you should get in place first? Should you apply everything all at once?

Everyone is different, and what works wonders for one person, may have no noticeable effect on someone else. That's because **there are so many factors to be considered**. Maybe you're going through a stressful period in your life, or you've had a traumatic experience that you still haven't processed very well. Or maybe you have a high amount of toxins and heavy metals in your body, and your liver is overwhelmed and overheated, keeping you wide awake at night. Maybe all you need to do is reduce the coffee and drink more water, or maybe you just have to move your workout to morning time... Or maybe, you're just a high sensitive person and using earplugs and an eye mask is all you need.

I don't know what it is that is keeping you awake at night, but I strongly believe that eating a wholefoods plant-based diet and creating a relaxing evening routine that suits your needs, is the best place to start.

For your convenience, I poured all the information we discussed in the previous chapters into **a comprehensible and actionable evening routine outline**. Feel free to play around and create a personal routine that works for you!

6pm — Dinner

Have dinner around 3-4 hours before going to bed. This will allow your digestive system to digest your food before you go to sleep, so your organs can focus on their most important

job at night, which is **detoxification** and **regeneration**. Going to bed with a full stomach will divert your energy from detoxification & regeneration to digestion. If this happens regularly, your body won't get the chance to rest and rejuvenate, which can lead to feelings of tiredness, exhaustion, feeling sluggish, craving sugar & stimulants, digestive issues, skin problems, and almost any other symptom associated with an internal toxic overload.

Ideally, a sleep-promoting dinner is **easily digestible** and contains healthy **carbs** (like sweet potato), **tryptophan-rich foods** and foods that contain **magnesium**, vitamin **B6**, and/ or **melatonin**. Of course this is just a suggestion you can experiment with, it's absolutely no must to include all these nutrients in every dinner. However, if you're truly committed to healing your sleep, I strongly recommend you work on **eliminating stimulants and processed foods** like MSG, refined sugar, flour and oils from your diet completely.

7pm — Winding Down

Especially if you're a sensitive person, you may want to start winding down already right after dinner. Schedule in some time to do something that relaxes and nourishes you on a soul level. Some ideas to get you started:

1. HAVE A HOT BATH WITH MAGNESIUM, RAW SALT AND OLIVE OIL

A hot bath temporarily raises your core body temperature, causing a steeper drop in temperature afterwards, which promotes **relaxation**. Adding in some minerals like magnesium and raw sea salt will help kickstart **detoxification**, relax your muscles and nervous system, and replenish your **mineral reserves** — which are essential for a healthy **melatonin** production. Add in a dash of olive oil to countereffect the dehydrating effect of the salt on your skin. You can also add in a few drops of your favourite essential oil, like lavender, ylang ylang, or chamomile.

2. READ A BOOK

Read an entertaining magazine, a comic book, a fiction novel, a spiritual book or any other light literature that makes you feel cosy and relaxed.

3. DRINK HERBAL TEA

Perfect in combination with a good book: a soothing herbal tea. Go for chamomile, passionflower, lemon balm, holy basil, or the [Serenity](#) tea blend.

4. LET GO

If there's something on your mind, talk about it — or if it's not a good time, make a conscious decision to leave it now for what it is and deal with it first thing in the morning.

5. WRITE IT OFF

If you're like me and you have trouble keeping your mind chatter under control, it can be very helpful to take 15 minutes in the evening to write down your **thoughts, intentions**, or **to-do-list** for the next day. Is there something that upset you today and you can't seem to get it off your mind? It's much more helpful to talk about it, write it down, or to meditate upon it than to keep overthinking it for the rest of the evening. Writing things down will help you get them out of your mind.

6. LISTEN TO MUSIC OR A GUIDED MEDITATION

Listen to soft, relaxing music. Make a **playlist** with music that relaxes you and helps bring your attention to the present moment.

Alternatively, you can listen to a **guided meditation**. This can be really effective if you find it difficult to calm down your inner chatter.

8pm — Two Things To Keep In Mind

1. AVOID BLUE LIGHT

Blue light-emitting objects like tv's, computer screens, tablets and smartphones disrupt your sleep. It's best to avoid blue light exposure in the evening. You can also install an app like [F.lux](#), which will adapt the colour of your screens according to the time of day. Your screen will look bright during the day, but will slowly turn yellowish towards the evening.

2. BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF

If you have been dealing with insomnia for a while, chances are high that even just the idea of sleep gives you stress. If you often find yourself lying wide awake at night, in pain, or unable to fall back asleep, this can cause some serious **trauma** and **anxiety**. I'm totally with you here. I've been there. But I'm also here to tell you that *it really is possible to heal your sleep*. Give yourself some time to adapt and to find out what works for you. **Be patient with yourself**. Take it one step at a time. Just keep moving in the right direction and soon you'll start to notice that your actions are bearing fruit.

10pm — Bedtime

1. CREATE A HABIT

Go to bed on time and **around the same time every day**. This can really make a big difference, as you will train your body to automatically switch to relaxation mode at that same time every day.

2. THE POWER OF 10PM

Aim to sleep by 10pm. It's between 10pm and 2am that your body does some **deep cleaning**, as your **liver** is at peak performance. If you never sleep or sleep very little between 10pm and 2am, chances are high you never feel well-rested and energized because your body never gets the opportunity to truly recover.

3. THE IDEAL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

#1 — TEMPERATURE

Make sure your bedroom isn't too hot or too cold.

The ideal bedroom temperature lies between 18°C and 19°C. [Temperatures below 13°C and above 24°C have been shown to be disruptive to sleep.](#)

#2 — DARKNESS

Make sure your bedroom is completely dark while you sleep

Especially if you're a sensitive person, use an eyemask and earplugs to mute external input. Make sure there are *no lights* in your bedroom — even the tiny little light of a charger can disturb your sleep! Switch off all electronic devices or even better, put them in another room.

#3 — LOWERING EMF EXPOSURE

You've probably already heard about [the potential health hazards of EMF](#) (electromagnetic fields). While avoiding EMF in today's society is almost impossible, you can start by making your bedroom a low-EMF zone. It's during sleep that your body detoxifies and regenerates, so you want your sleeping environment to facilitate — not sabotage — these important processes. If you frequently experience headaches, hyperactivity, nightmares, fatigue, eyestrain, and muscle cramps, especially during the night, these may be indicators that the EMF in your bedroom is too high. (via [Powerful and Simple Tips to Help Lower Your EMF Risks](#))

Tips to lower EMF exposure in your bedroom:

- Turn off and unplug any electrical devices at night

- Avoid metal bedframes and springs
- Avoid synthetic fabrics and mattresses
- Opt for natural materials like wood and organic cotton, which have a grounding and calming effect on your body

If you're looking into buying a great quality, organic mattress or bed linen, have a look at [Coco-Mat](#). They make incredibly comfortable mattresses, pillows, blankets, linen and other sleep stuff with natural materials like coconut & cactus fibers, natural rubber, seaweed, eucalyptus, and organic cotton.

#4 — FRESH AIR

Make sure your bedroom is well-ventilated. Always leave a window open to allow fresh oxygen to come in — and CO₂ to get out. Adding some [air-purifying plants](#) to your bedroom will also help improve air quality.

5

Still Can't Sleep?

“If you're trying to achieve, there will be roadblocks. I've had them; everybody has had them. But obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

– *Michael Jordan*



If you often experience trouble falling or staying asleep, you may start to feel irritated and desperate when your efforts aren't bearing fruit straight away. You seem to do everything right and still can't sleep!

If you have suffered from insomnia for years, your sleeping problems may not resolve in just a couple of days. You definitely want to **take your time** to try different things and **experiment** to see what works best for you personally.

I know it's hard. I've been there. It can be really frustrating and exhausting. When I wake up during the night and I can't fall asleep again within 30 minutes, I get up, go to another room or even outside to do some light **yoga**, or **meditate** and **breathe**. I distract myself from thinking 'What am I doing, I'm losing hours of sleep!' by calmly engaging in my practice and just relaxing, focusing on my breath and **being gentle** with myself. Most of the time, I will get sleepy again within 15 minutes. Then I go to bed and focus on my breath until I fall asleep again.

If you often find yourself waking up with a racing mind, it can be very useful to listen to a **guided meditation**. Listening to someone else's voice can be very soothing and it will help distract you from your own thoughts.

Hey lovely,

Thanks so much for reading all the way through. I know that you are truly committed to your health and wellbeing, and so I wish you everything you need in order to continue and grow on your journey. I hope this guide has helped you along in one way or another.

Working on improving your health will be so rewarding, and your efforts will bear fruit very soon.

I warmly wish you a peaceful and restorative sleep, so you have the energy to be yourself and to do the things that bring you joy.

Feel free to send me your thoughts and suggestions about this ebook. I'm always curious to learn more from you so I can keep improving my service.

Much love & healing vibes your way,

Siobhan x