BOOKTRONAUT



THE NIGHT SERIES

Sleep Like You Mean It

14 nights. One small change each night. Better sleep for good.

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This book shares general sleep habits for healthy adults. It is not medical advice and does not diagnose or treat any condition. If you snore loudly, stop breathing or gasp in your sleep, feel very sleepy during the day, have had trouble sleeping for more than three months, or are pregnant, taking medication or living with a health condition, talk to a doctor before changing your routine. Never drive or operate machinery when you feel drowsy.

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START HERE

Before Night One

You probably know you should sleep more. Everyone does. You've read the articles, seen the charts, maybe bought a fancy pillow. And still you lie there at midnight, scrolling, thinking, waiting.

The problem isn't knowledge. It's that most sleep advice arrives as a list of twenty rules, all at once. Nobody changes twenty things at once.

So this book does it differently. Fourteen nights. One small change per night. Each change stacks on the one before. By night fourteen you won't have a new list of rules. You'll have a new routine that already feels normal.

How it works

Each night has one change, the reason behind it, and a few lines to write what happened.

Keep each change after you add it. Night three includes nights one and two.

Use the diary at the back of the book every morning. It takes thirty seconds and shows you what's really working.

Be patient. Some nights will be worse before they get better. That's normal. Your body is learning a new rhythm.

What good sleep looks like

Most adults need somewhere between seven and nine hours. But the number isn't everything. Good sleep usually means you fall asleep within about twenty to thirty minutes, wake up rarely, and feel reasonably awake during the day without needing coffee to function.

If that sounds far away right now, good. That means there's room to improve.

> ### SEE A DOCTOR FIRST IF
>
> You snore loudly or someone has noticed you stop breathing in your sleep. You fall asleep during the day without meaning to. You've had trouble sleeping most nights for more than three months. Your legs feel restless or uncomfortable at night. You feel low, anxious or hopeless most of the time. These can be signs of conditions that habits alone won't fix, and many of them are very treatable.

BEFORE YOU CHANGE ANYTHING

Your Starting Point

Before you change anything, write down how you sleep now. You'll compare this page to night fourteen.

What time do you usually go to bed on weekdays? On weekends?

What time do you usually wake up on weekdays? On weekends?

How long does it take you to fall asleep?

How many times do you wake up at night, and why?

What do you do in the last hour before bed?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how rested do you feel most mornings?

What would better sleep change in your life?

THE FOUNDATION

Week One

The first week builds the base. Timing, light, and the hour before bed. These three things have more effect on sleep than any supplement or gadget.

Night 1. Pick a wake up time

The change. Choose one wake up time and keep it every day, including weekends. Yes, weekends too.

Why it works. Your body has an internal clock. It likes regular signals. A fixed wake up time is the strongest signal you can give it. Bedtime will follow naturally over the next few weeks.

Tip. Pick a time you can actually keep seven days a week. If you sleep in on Saturday, keep it within one hour of your usual time.

My wake up time is

What happened tonight and this morning?

Night 2. Morning light

The change. Within an hour of waking up, get ten to fifteen minutes of daylight. Outside if possible. A window helps but outside is better, even on a cloudy day.

Why it works. Bright light in the morning tells your body clock the day has started. That makes it easier to feel sleepy at the right time in the evening.

Tip. Combine it with something you already do. Coffee on the balcony, a short walk, or a call on the way to work.

What happened?

Night 3. The caffeine cutoff

The change. No caffeine after early afternoon. Count eight to ten hours before your planned bedtime and stop there. Remember that tea, cola, energy drinks and chocolate all contain caffeine.

Why it works. Caffeine can stay in your system for many hours. You might fall asleep fine, but your sleep can be lighter and more broken.

Tip. Switch your afternoon coffee for decaf or herbal tea for these two weeks and see what happens.

What happened?

Night 4. Dim the house

The change. Two hours before bed, dim the lights at home. Use lamps instead of ceiling lights. Warmer light is better.

Why it works. Bright light in the evening tells your brain it's still daytime and delays the sleepy signals your body produces naturally at night.

Tip. Make it a ritual. Lights down is the first sign that the day is closing.

What happened?

Night 5. The screen curfew

The change. Put your phone away thirty to sixty minutes before bed. Out of the bedroom if you can. Get a cheap alarm clock if you use your phone as one.

Why it works. It's not only the light. Phones are designed to keep you awake and engaged. Messages, news and videos wind your brain up exactly when it needs to wind down.

Tip. Charge your phone in the kitchen. The first few nights will feel strange. That feeling is the point.

What happened?

Night 6. The wind down hour

The change. Build a calm last hour. Choose two or three quiet activities. A shower, light stretching, reading a paper book, music, preparing tomorrow's clothes.

Why it works. Your brain needs a runway, not a cliff. The same routine every night becomes a signal that sleep is coming.

My wind down hour will be

What happened?

Night 7. Week one review

Look at your diary. What changed this week? Which change was easiest? Which was hardest?

FINE TUNING

Week Two

Week two moves into the bedroom and into your head. These changes deal with the environment and the thoughts that keep you awake.

Night 8. Cool, dark and quiet

The change. Make your bedroom cooler, darker and quieter. Many people sleep best in a room around 17 to 19 degrees Celsius. Use blackout curtains or an eye mask. Earplugs or a fan can help with noise.

Why it works. Your body temperature naturally drops at night to help you sleep. A cool room helps that happen. Light and noise can wake you even when you don't remember it.

Tip. Look around your bedroom tonight. What lights up? Cover standby lights with a piece of tape.

What happened?

Night 9. Bed is for sleep

The change. Use your bed only for sleep and intimacy. No working, no scrolling, no watching shows in bed.

Why it works. Your brain learns by association. If your bed means work and screens, it stays alert there. If your bed means sleep, it starts to relax the moment you lie down.

What happened?

Night 10. The worry list

The change. Early in the evening, spend ten minutes writing down everything on your mind. Tasks, worries, ideas. Next to each, write one next step or simply "tomorrow".

Why it works. Many people lie awake because their brain is trying not to forget things. Writing them down tells your brain it can let go.

Tonight's list

Night 11. The 20 minute rule

The change. If you can't sleep after about twenty minutes, get up. Go to another room, keep the lights low and do something boring until you feel sleepy. Then go back to bed.

Why it works. Lying awake and frustrated teaches your brain that bed is a place for struggle. Getting up breaks that connection. Don't watch the clock. Just estimate.

What happened?

Night 12. Food and drink timing

The change. Finish your last big meal two to three hours before bed. Go easy on alcohol, especially late in the evening. Drink less fluid in the last hour.

Why it works. Heavy meals can make it harder to fall asleep. Alcohol may make you drowsy at first, but it often makes sleep lighter and more broken later in the night. Too much water means bathroom trips.

What happened?

Night 13. The breathing reset

The change. In bed, breathe slowly. In through your nose for four counts, hold gently for a moment, out through your mouth for six counts. Repeat ten times. Let your shoulders drop on each breath out.

Why it works. Slow breathing with a longer exhale helps your body switch toward rest mode. It also gives your mind something simple to focus on.

Tip. If you lose count, just start again. That's part of the exercise.

What happened?

Night 14. Your sleep blueprint

The change. Look back at all fourteen nights. Keep the changes that helped most and write them down as your personal sleep routine.

My sleep blueprint

THE SHORT VERSION

How Sleep Works

You don't need a science degree to sleep well, but knowing a little about what happens at night makes the changes in this book make sense.

Two forces

Sleep is driven by two forces working together. The first is sleep pressure. From the moment you wake up, a sleepy signal slowly builds in your brain. The longer you're awake, the stronger it gets. Sleep clears it away. Caffeine works partly by blocking that signal for a while, which is why a late coffee can mess with your night.

The second is your body clock. It's a roughly 24 hour rhythm that tells your body when to be alert and when to wind down. Light is its strongest signal. Morning light sets it. Evening light confuses it.

When both forces line up, sleep comes easily. When they fight, you lie awake.

The night in cycles

Sleep isn't one long state. You move through cycles of about 90 minutes, from light sleep into deep sleep and then into REM sleep, the stage linked with vivid dreams. A full night usually has four

to six of these cycles.

Deep sleep tends to come more in the first half of the night. REM tends to come more in the second half. That's one reason why cutting your night short in the morning can leave you feeling foggy, even if you fell asleep fast.

Waking up is normal

Almost everyone wakes up briefly several times a night. Most people don't remember it. Waking up isn't the problem. Getting stressed about being awake is what makes it hard to fall back asleep.

WHAT NOT TO BELIEVE

Sleep Myths

Myth. You can catch up on all your sleep at the weekend. A little extra sleep can help, but long lie ins shift your body clock and make Monday night harder. A steady rhythm works better.

Myth. Alcohol helps you sleep. It can make you drowsy, but it usually makes sleep lighter and more broken later in the night.

Myth. Some people only need five hours. A very small number of people may genuinely need less sleep, but most people who think they're fine on five hours are simply used to feeling tired.

Myth. Lying in bed resting is as good as sleeping. Resting is nice, but it isn't sleep. And lying awake for long periods can teach your brain that bed is a place for being awake.

Myth. Watching TV in bed helps you relax. It may feel relaxing, but light and engaging content keep your brain alert.

Myth. Snoring is harmless. Often it is, but loud snoring with pauses in breathing can be a sign of sleep apnea, which needs a doctor.

Myth. Older people need less sleep. Sleep often becomes lighter with age, but most adults still need roughly the same amount.

WHEN IT ISN'T WORKING

Troubleshooting

Some nights will still be bad. That's normal. Here are the most common problems and what to try.

I wake up at 3 in the morning and can't get back to sleep

Don't check the time and don't pick up your phone. Try the breathing reset. If you're still awake after about twenty minutes, use the 20 minute rule. Watch your alcohol and late meals. If this happens most nights for weeks, talk to a doctor.

I'm tired but wired at bedtime

Your wind down hour may be too short or too busy. Start dimming the lights earlier. Do the worry list earlier in the evening. Move exercise to earlier in the day.

I can't keep the weekend wake up time

Allow yourself up to one hour later, not more. Get morning light as soon as you wake. A short nap of up to twenty minutes in the early afternoon is better than sleeping in until noon.

My partner has a different schedule

Talk about it. Earplugs, an eye mask and separate blankets help more than you'd expect. Agree on screen rules for the bedroom.

I work shifts

Shift work makes everything harder. Keep the bedroom very dark during the day, use earplugs, and protect your sleep window like an appointment. Ask your doctor or workplace for specific shift work advice.

I followed everything and still sleep badly

Then it's time to talk to a doctor. Long term insomnia is common and treatable, and there are proven therapies, including a structured program called CBT for insomnia. Problems like sleep apnea need proper testing. Asking for help is the smart move, not a failure.

EVERY MORNING, THIRTY SECONDS

The Sleep Diary

Fill in one line every morning. Bedtime, wake time, how long it took to fall asleep, how many times you woke up, and how rested you feel from 1 to 10.

Week one

Week two

What I notice

COMPARE

Day Fourteen

Go back to your starting point. Answer the same questions again.

What time do you go to bed and wake up now?

How long does it take you to fall asleep?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how rested do you feel most mornings?

What changed the most? What will you keep?

> *Sleep is not a break from your life. It's the part that makes the rest of it work.*



Thank you for reading

Good sleep isn't a luxury and it isn't laziness. It's the quiet work your body and mind do every night so you can show up the next day. Treat it like it matters, because it does.

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