

dietitian cassie's GUIDE TO SLEEPING SOUNDLY



You can be doing everything else right, but if you're slacking on sleep, you're sabotaging your weight and health.

These are my top strategies for getting a better night's sleep!

Minimize blue light exposure. Exposure to blue light—that light emitted by your TV, computer, smartphone and tablet screens—around bedtime disrupts your body's melatonin production, which can interfere with sleep. Of course, a no-brainer solution to the late night technology dilemma would be to simply turn it off, but I know that's not always realistic. That's why I'm thankful to have found a handful of helpful apps for electronic devices that have saved my own sleep, the sleep of our clients, and will likely save yours, too!

Sleep Apps:

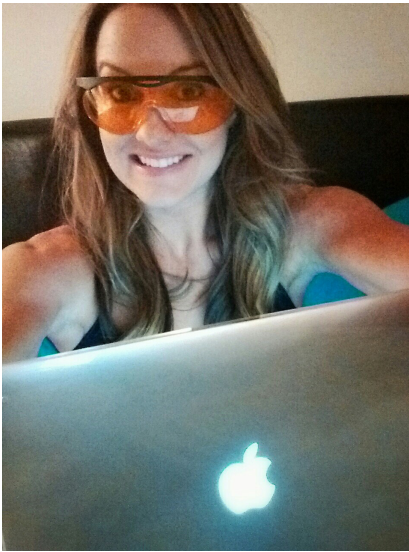
- *F.lux* (for Macs)
- *Twilight* (for an Android phone)
- *Sleep Cycle* (available for both iOS and Android devices)

Here's how to use them:

F.lux and *Twilight* are both free apps that make the color of your screen adapt to the time of day by filtering out the blue light emitted by your device after sunset. You might be surprised because the change is so subtle, you don't necessarily even notice these apps gradually changing your screen's color. However, if you disable or pause it, you'll be shocked by how bright your screen gets! Personally, I didn't truly realize how much my evening technology use was interfering with my sleep until I experimented with these apps.

Sleep Cycle is one I personally use every single night. It tracks your movements to analyze your sleep patterns and wakes you up when you are in the lightest phase of sleep. This helps you wake up feeling more rested, instead of being jolted out of bed when your alarm clock goes off! It has become kind of a game for me when I wake up. In the morning I consider how rested I feel and guess the percentage of quality sleep I got, then I compare my guess with the analytics on the app. It's not just the time you "clock in" bed that counts. It's the quality of your sleep that matters (similar to our approach to calories, right!?). This app encourages awareness as it shows you how much of your time in bed was actually spent getting quality sleep.

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Use a Pair of amber goggles. An alternative to sleep apps because they do the same thing: filter out blue light emitted from screens. On top of that, they make you look cool, too. I used these until I got the sleep apps downloaded onto all of my devices.

Track your caffeine consumption. A cup of coffee in the morning is fine for most of us, but problems arise when coffee is consumed all day long. Even a cup in the afternoon can interfere with sleep, and that's because **the half-life of caffeine is around five or six hours**.

This means if you're relying on a cup of java to help you get through the afternoon, the caffeine could very well still be in your system at bedtime, interfering with your sleep. It's a vicious cycle that's all too common in the world today: coffee interfering with sleep and lack of sleep interfering with energy levels, thus causing you to consume more coffee, which interferes with your next night's sleep... It goes on and on.

Figure out your individual "coffee cut-off" time—the time when you know that if you drink any amount of caffeine thereafter, it's likely to interfere with your sleep. The best way to figure this out is to track your sleep, and when your last intake of caffeine was the day before. Once you've determined a good cutoff time, your best bet is to consume caffeine before that time so you don't find yourself in the middle of this vicious cycle.

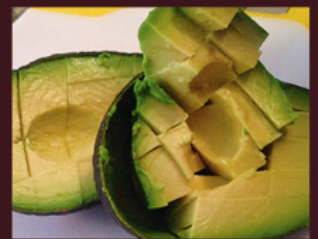
Have a bedtime snack. Skipping your bedtime snack can be a culprit for lack of sleep, as it can cause you to wake up in the middle of the night when your blood sugar levels drop. Blood sugars begin dropping after your last meal of the day, so to promote stable blood sugars all night long (which in turn promotes restful sleep), it's essential to bring your blood sugar levels back up slightly with a snack before bed. Have a bedtime snack that contains fat and carbs, such as a half cup of berries with a quarter cup of coconut milk, a small apple sautéed in coconut oil, cheese and olives or avocado pudding.

Slice up an avocado and a banana

Smooosh them together with about 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder

Savor a perfectly balanced bedtime snack for two!

✓ *dietitian cassie approved!*



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Limit alcohol consumption to outside of bedtime.

Many people think alcohol helps them fall asleep, and sometimes it does. The problem is, more often than not, it interferes with the quality of your sleep. That's because alcohol negatively affects your blood sugar levels. For some people, blood sugar drops immediately after consuming it, while in others, it spikes quickly, which is then followed by a precipitous drop. If you "crash" in the middle of the night, you're going to have trouble sleeping. If you have a drink, it's best to have it earlier in the evening, and preferably with a meal. Since alcohol negatively affects blood sugar, it's crucial to balance it with protein, fat and carbohydrates (PFC) in order to keep those blood sugar levels as stable as possible to promote a restful night's sleep.

Find the combination of these 5 supplements that are most effective for you:

1. Pure Magnesium: This is my first go-to supplement for sleep support. Magnesium is an important mineral—involved in over 300 different processes in the body—and most of us are deficient in it! Due to deterioration of soil minerals over the years, our food has less and less magnesium to offer us. One of the many wonderful things magnesium does for us is that it helps our muscles relax—allowing us to fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly. A general recommendation is starting with four tablets (400mg) of Pure Magnesium a half hour or so before bed (with your bedtime snack!). It can take your body a few days to adjust, so give it some time, and if after a week or so, it doesn't seem to be helping, I suggest bumping it up by one tablet per day, until you find the right dosage that works for you. It's also great for muscle cramps, "Charlie horses," headaches, eye twitches and chocolate cravings. Some people find magnesium does the trick, and others require some additional support. If you're still tossing and turning, move on to the next sleep support supplement on the list.



2. 5-HTP: This popular supplement is for sleep disorders, especially for people who wake up in the middle of the night with racing thoughts. Some people have a really hard time making enough serotonin (a brain chemical that affects sleep) from protein, especially if their gut health isn't up to par. 5-HTP is an essential precursor that provides an extra boost for serotonin production. It can help improve your body's ability to make enough serotonin to keep you feeling calm, happy and sleepy. A general recommendation is 1-2 capsules (50-100mg) before bed, and if you don't notice improvement after a few weeks, increase the dosage until you do.



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3. Estrovera: For women waking up with hot flashes, I recommend taking Estrovera to help get them under control. A general recommendation is to take one before bed each night, and give your body a week or two to adjust before you decide whether or not it works for you. Some women find they only need one tablet, and others find that two work best.



4. Melatonin: Melatonin is synthesized and released in response to light and darkness, but as I mentioned earlier, many of us aren't producing it as we should be thanks to technology use too close to bedtime. I don't recommend taking melatonin on a regular basis because we want your body to produce it naturally, but it's an important tool in your sleep arsenal to help your body "reset." It can also be helpful while traveling or in sleep environments that are different from your norm on a short-term basis. It helps you fall asleep, although it may not help you stay asleep, so I generally recommend taking it in conjunction with your Pure Magnesium. A general recommendation is to start with 3mg about half an hour before bed (with your bedtime snack). I suggest giving yourself a solid 8 hours to sleep to avoid any potential grogginess the next morning.



5. MyoCalm P.M.: Last but not least is MyoCalm P.M. For those who need a little more help than Pure Magnesium alone can offer, this combination of herbs and minerals promotes restful, sound sleep. A general recommendation is three tablets about a half hour before bed (with your bedtime snack). It's also helpful after exercise, to soothe sore muscles or if you struggle with any kind of chronic muscle tension or pain, including TMJ and other night-clenching behavior. It can also be taken at a lower dose (1 tablet at a time) throughout the day to ease tension without knocking you out (even though it says PM, it won't cause you to get drowsy during the day!).



Disclaimer: Remember, **supplement quality matters**. If you've tried sleep support supplements before and they haven't worked, it is very likely a quality issue. That's why I'm recommending the specific brands of these supplements as linked above.

If you find that, after implementing the recommendations in this guide, you are still stumped, please consider meeting with one of the [Healthy Simple Life dietitian coaches](#) who can help you dig deeper, as there could be many other factors influencing your sleep.