GET THE GOOD SLEEP HABIT IN 30 DAYS

There are so many ways you can relax and prepare for sleep. From pampering yourself to reading a book, doing breathing exercises to listening to calming music, here are 30 ideas to get you started.

NO MORE COUNTING SHEEP
SLEEP WELL

Set a time for bed

Work out when to start winding down. Work back 8 hours from when you want to wake up, then start your bedtime routine 45 minutes before that.

Get ready for tomorrow

Get everything you're going to need for tomorrow ready tonight. Your bag. Your lunchbox. Whatever it is that will make your morning routine more relaxed.

Keep it loose

What you wear in bed can also affect the quality of your sleep. Wearing something loose, or nothing at all, helps your skin to breathe and keep cool. By lowering your body temperature you'll improve both the quality and quantity of your sleep.

Have a warm milky drink

Drink warm milk before bed. The tryptophan in milk produces the happy chemical serotonin in your brain that boosts health and wellbeing and helps regulate your body's sleep-wake-cycle.

Write a journal

Think about your day and take a few moments to reflect on the positive. Practising gratitude regularly helps you feel more optimistic, satisfied with your life and enjoy better physical health.

Turn the lights down

Make your room as dark as possible. Invest in some blackout blinds, a sleep mask and low level lighting to give your brain maximum cues it's night and time for sleep.

Prep your breakfast

Use the time before bed to get your breakfast ready for the next morning. Many studies have linked eating breakfast to good health, including better memory and concentration.

Write a to do list

Researchers at Baylor University in Texas have discovered that people who take five minutes to write down their to do list before bed found it easier to drop off to sleep.

Check the forecast

Check tomorrow's weather forecast so you can get your outfit ready before you head to bed. Just one more thing to do as you start winding down for bed and it also helps make your morning routine less stressful.

Wipe off the day

Face washed. Teeth cleaned. Whatever you do for your beauty routine, incorporate it into your bedtime routine early on. You want to avoid feeling too alert from cool face products just before you climb into bed.

Tidy up

Do the washing up, take out the bins, de-clutter your sleep space. Take a few minutes each night to clean up the day's mess because a cleaner space helps you relax and unwind and also helps you start the next day in a brighter mood.

Plan to be active

As part of preparing for tomorrow, get your gym kit out and ready. Exercising in the day contributes hugely to the quality of your sleep at night. It produces endorphins - the chemicals in your brain that act as natural painkillers - and helps reduce stress.

Keep it quiet

The ideal sleeping environment is cool, dark and quiet. If you live in a noisy neighbourhood, invest in some ear plugs to keep things as quiet as possible.

Colour it in

Colouring in isn't just for kids so get hold of a colouring book and start colouring. It's calming and a great way to practice mindfulness - being totally in the moment and stopping your mind racing.

Draw the curtains

Make your room as dark as possible. Invest in some blackout blinds if you can to give your brain maximum cues it's night time and it's time for sleep.

Go to the loo

An obvious one but go to the loo just before you want to sleep to limit the chances of being disturbed in the night.

Be grateful

Think about your day and take a few moments to reflect on the positive. Ending the day focusing on what's good in your life helps you de-stress and re-focus on what matters. It's proven that those who practice gratitude on a regular basis are more optimistic, more satisfied with their lives, have improved relationships with others and enjoy better physical health.

Fill your memory jar

On a small piece of paper, write down one thing you want to remember about today. However small, the one thing that puts a smile on your face or leaves a good feeling. Pop it in a memory jar and repeat this each day before you turn the lights out. On New Year's Eve you can read them all and remember a great year.

Set an alarm

Not your phone alarm clock... find one that doesn't emit blue light and that can wake you gently in the morning. You'll find once you establish a regular bedtime routine, you'll be naturally waking up just before it goes off!

Pamper yourself

Why not try a DIY face mask to help you relax and get ready for bed? Whether it's honey, avocado, oatmeal, egg or milk based there are loads of recipes available online for you to make up your favourite concoction and give yourself a good pamper before bed.

Spritz your pillow

Certain essential oils can help relieve stress, relax the body and contribute to better sleep. Dilute with water and spritz into the air and over your pillow. Sleep favourites include: lavender; lemon; bergamot; ylang ylang; clary sage and jasmine.

Read a book

Reading for just 15-30 minutes a day doesn't just relax you but boosts your memory & vocabulary. Also being absorbed in an imaginary world reduces stress and the action of reading can significantly contribute to making you feel sleepy.

Have a bubble bath

Having a bath or taking a relaxing shower is great for your bedtime routine. Use lavender oil or body wash to help your mind switch off and your body to relax. The rise in your body temperature followed by the drop when you get out helps promote drowsiness.

Check the temperature

Your bedroom should ideally be between 16-18°C (60-65°F). You're just one big fleshy hot water bottle heating up your sleep space. During the night the body needs to lose heat and this is done mainly through your head and face - the bits sticking out from under the duvet! A cool bedroom helps with this heat loss.

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Brush your hair

Brushing your hair before bed is known to relax both your body and mind. So invest in a good brush and run it through your hair 100 times before you head to bed to promote a sense of calm and relaxation.

Switch off tech

Switch off all tech. Anything that emits blue light that's going to delay your body from releasing the sleepy hormone melatonin, including TV, laptop and phone.

Listen to calming music

Similar to mindfulness, listening to calming music before bed can slow your heart rate and breathing, lower your blood pressure and trigger muscles to relax. Listening to relaxing music 45 minutes before bed is proven to help us fall asleep faster, sleep for longer and wake less during the night.

Breathe deeply

Deep, focused mindful breathing allows more oxygen to circulate round your body which has a calming effect. Try 4-7-8 breathing: breathe in deeply through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds and breathe slowly out of your mouth for 8 seconds.

Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness helps us take charge of our busy minds, moving from a worried to a more relaxed state. Becoming mindful, we create physiological changes in our body that are similar to those that happen as we are nodding off to sleep. Our pulse slows, blood pressure drops and stress hormones decrease putting us in the best possible frame of mind for sleep.

Stretch it out

To alleviate any stress you're carrying around in your body, do some yoga stretches before bed. Lie on your back with the soles of your feet together, your knees bent and dropping toward the floor. Place your arms, palms up, by your sides, keeping your shoulders back and your chest open. Close your eyes and inhale through your nose while slowly counting to four, then exhale while counting back down to one. Continue for as long as it takes you to feel fully relaxed.