

- Medical awareness

THREE WAYS TO RESTORATIVE SLEEP



Sleep quality differs for each individual. It is greatly influenced by a number of factors including environment, emotional state, stress level, nutritional status, and even bedtime habits. You may find yourself feeling refreshed the next day or perhaps exhausted after experiencing interrupted sleep.

Sleep has been created or designed by our Maker to heal, restore, and repair the brain as well as body systems. This happens in five stages, which should be completed in a sleep cycle.

This occurrence puts us in a phase called the restorative sleep. Unfortunately, we don't always get this type of quality sleep in this fast-paced society. That is the big difference between our ancestors and the modern-day

us. They get quality rest after a hard day's work. Therefore they have fewer illnesses, which are quite rampant among us today.

Here are three practical ways to incorporate sleep hygiene into our lifestyle in order to achieve restorative sleep each night you get that much needed snooze:

1. Exercise or be physically active by walking and simply moving around throughout the day. This helps produce the hormone serotonin, which facilitates the production of the sleep hormone melatonin when night comes. Exercise not only improves blood circulation and oxygenation of the brain but also relaxes the mind and body. Relaxation and mindful breathing is vital to promoting good, quality sleep.

2. Watch what you consume a few hours before bedtime. Caffeine containing beverages and food items like coffee, black tea, and chocolate are high in caffeine content. This keeps you alert and wide awake. Instead, have some warm milk (unless you are lactose intolerant). Milk is rich in the amino acid tryptophan, which aids in melatonin production. It is also advisable to have light meals during dinner time to prevent any discomfort and indigestion that may cause difficulty in falling asleep.

3. Have a downtime and dim the lights before bedtime. Better yet, put the lights off when it's time to go to bed, even if you are wide awake and sorely tempted to turn the switch on. Darkness signals the production of melatonin to put you to sleep. If you have to get up and go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, use a night light. This will

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prevent melatonin production from decreasing, which will give you a difficult time to go back to sleep and eventually keep you awake all night. In the same manner, gadgets must be turned off and set aside. They emit blue light, which also disrupts melatonin production. If you must tire your eyes out to fall into a deep slumber, it is better to have a book or any reading material in handy with a soft reading light.

If you still find yourself experiencing insomnia or sleep disturbance, it is best to consult a sleep specialist for proper assessment and management. Lack of quality sleep must never be brushed off because it is gravely detrimental to our health, not to mention the way it negatively impacts our productivity, mood, and even relationships.

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