

- Sleep



PILLOW TALK

It's one of the simplest necessities for living well, boosting energy and looking great. But when quality sleep is elusive, it can feel debilitating and infuriatingly out of reach. What to do?

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046 | mindfood.com

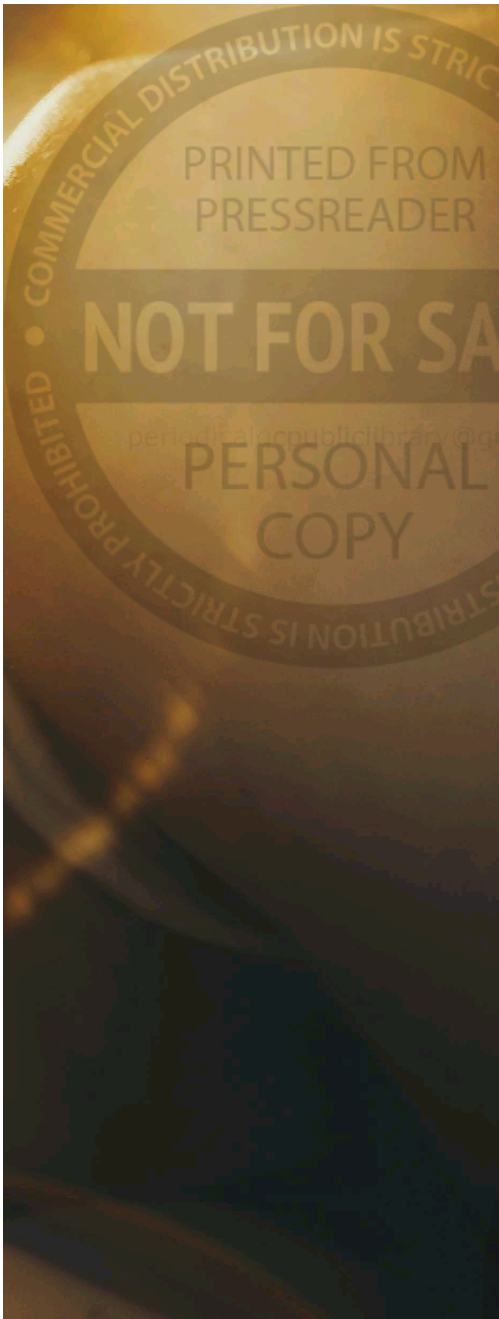
In an age when it seems there are few limits to the abilities of treatments, products and supplements to improve our appearance, it's easy to forget that sometimes the simplest things can't be bought. Like getting enough sleep. It's the time when our body and skin rests and renews; and enough hours completely at rest can be credited with more effective cell repair and regeneration. Not to mention mental clarity and happiness. But if you're someone who has trouble falling asleep and staying that way, those statements can be anxiety inducing.

One cause if not for comfort, then solidarity? You're certainly not alone. Globally, the 'sleep economy', which includes

everything from beds and pillows to medical devices and pharmaceuticals, is expected to be worth AU\$869 billion this year, according to global data gathering platform, Statista. The good news is demand is driving plenty of solutions encompassing wisdom old and new.

In order to encourage the skin's ability to heal and regenerate, beauty products designed to apply before bed are also increasingly popular. Lightweight, gel-based sleeping masks and nutrient-rich serum ampoules make the most of skin temperature and circulation changes at rest.

Another burgeoning offshoot? Travel with better rest in mind, including dedicated sleep retreats, involving everything from



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Supplement Success

Non-pharmaceutical sleep supplements are growing quickly as more is understood about specific ingredients and natural extracts.

While it's important to address the underlying reasons for a lack of sleep – particularly chronic insomnia – by consulting a doctor, there are plenty of options that claim to help with occasional sleep troubles.

The inclusion of ingredients with purported adaptogenic properties is increasingly appearing in powders, pills and teas for sleep relief.

Adaptogens are herbal extracts, roots and mushrooms claimed to help your body respond positively to stress, anxiety, fatigue and overall wellbeing. Some have been used for centuries in Chinese and Ayurvedic healing traditions but offer little in the way of widespread scientific research on any benefits.

Adaptogens play a part in a supplement by Jeuneora that is gaining plenty of buzz. Just one of a number of new sleep-friendly snacks and drinks on the market, the brand's

Beauty Sleep powder turns into a hot chocolate-flavoured drink to be taken before bed.

"The blend of adaptogenic mushrooms [reishi, maitake and shiitake] supports healthy energy levels and mood balance during times of stress, while also supporting your immune system and a more restful sleep," explains Jeuneora founder Monique Kaminski, saying the inclusion of a pistachio extract supports the results.

Well-known supplement brand Blackmores has also recently fine-tuned its sleep range to include ingredients like valerian, lemon balm, and hops alongside magnesium and lavender to target specific challenges and now includes Deep Sleep, Fall Asleep and Beauty Sleep formulas. The latter also includes retinol, hyaluronic acid, collagen and Vitamin C to help nourish skin overnight.

circadian-boosting hikes, sleep science lectures and guided meditation to luxury accommodation set up to assist in tranquil slumber. (Presumably not including those hotel curtains that always have a gap!) But if you're not in the market for that extent of commitment, what can you do?

After completing a range of degrees in the wellness space including a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology), sleep expert Olivia Arezzolo has made a career out of studying the most effective approaches to good sleep and helping clients achieve this. We all have a different chronotype – a natural disposition to feel alert or sleepy at certain times of the day and night. While changing your natural

chronotype isn't possible, it's helpful to know how much your body actually needs and when. Regardless, there are strategies to improve sleep no matter when you're getting it. These are Arezzolo's top tips:

CHOOSE A QUALITY MATTRESS

One of the biggest misconceptions is that you should sleep on a flat mattress – it's not always optimal. Rather, consider an adjustable bed that allows you to sleep at zero gravity, which is where there is no gravitational force on your spine. This is typically more comfortable and therefore allows you to toss and turn less, and sleep deeper through the night.

REDUCE BLUE LIGHT TWO HOURS BEFORE BED

Minimise light, power down from screens, or if you can't, wear 100% blue light blocking glasses. Light is our primary *zeitgeber* (factor that controls the circadian rhythm), and exposure to it prior to bed can suppress melatonin, our sleepiness hormone, by over 50% – making it near impossible to fall and stay asleep.

IF YOU CAN'T SLEEP, GET UP

This interrupts the pattern of mental rumination and anxiety, and as such, is actually helpful to return to sleep easier. Take a sleep supplement or diffuse some lavender, to feel more calm; try distracting yourself by reading, writing or meditating. Wear 100% blue light glasses, otherwise any light will further enhance alertness.

MAINTAIN GOOD NUTRITION

A diet rich in sleep-promoting nutrients such as tryptophan (an amino acid) and omega-3s, while low in sugar, caffeine and alcohol, will naturally help you sleep better. For example, drinking coffee at 4pm can reduce your total sleep time by over 1 hour. On the other hand, supplementing with omega-3 fatty acids can improve your sleep quality considerably.