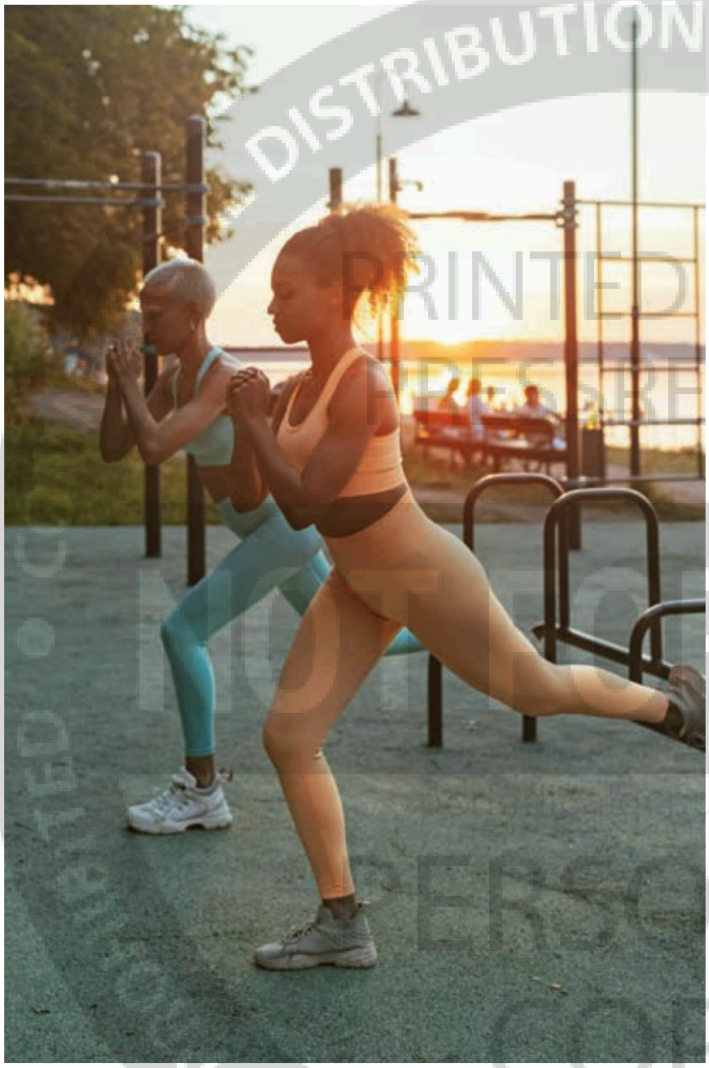
- Sleep / Exercise



Improve sleep with evening exercises

While rigorous exercise before bed has long been discouraged, researchers have found that short bursts of light activity can improve sleep. In a world-first study, participants completed two four-hour evening sessions, one of prolonged sitting and another with three-minute activity breaks every half hour. The study found that participants who took the activity breaks slept 30 minutes longer. Lead author Jennifer Gale notes that prolonged sitting is linked to a higher risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and death. The exercise intervention involved three exercises, chair squats, calf raises and standing knee raises with straight-leg hip extensions. These simple bodyweight exercises were chosen because they don't require any equipment or much space and can be done without interrupting the TV show you're watching. The fact that these exercises lead to longer sleep is important because insufficient sleep can affect diet and is associated with heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Source: BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine