

PULSE

SLEEP BETTER TONIGHT

FOLLOW THIS ROADMAP TO BETTER ZZZ'S.

We all need a little sleep support sometimes. Losing out on all-important snoozing hours can be frustrating and disruptive—and too little dozing can put a damper on your health. Even if you have good nighttime habits in general, you may still sometimes have difficulty settling into slumber. These expert-backed sleep hacks just might help you get to dreamland.

1

Make over your mornings.

A good night's rest starts when you say "Rise and shine!" the morning before. To improve your sleep, establish a consistent morning routine: Focus on waking up at around the same time each day, including weekends and holidays; try to expose yourself to daylight—which regulates your circadian rhythm—first thing; and fuel up with an energizing breakfast (like the one on page 10) that includes a filling combo of protein and fiber. Finally, squeeze in a morning workout if your schedule allows.

COREY MAYWALT (BIRDS); JUAN MOYANO/ISTOCKSY (LAMP).



2

Set the mood.

At night, try switching to amber or red lightbulbs in a lamp or two—these are less mentally stimulating and can trigger natural melatonin production, says Sarah Silverman, Psy.D., a behavioral sleep medicine specialist and a holistic sleep wellness consultant. It's an easy decor tweak: Look for a salt lamp or color-changing lightbulbs (they connect with an app that lets you change the light color). Also, switch smartphone, laptop, and tablet screens to "night mode" or whatever setting turns the screen a dimmer yellowish hue—and do your best to stop using these devices starting about an hour before bedtime.

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3

Take a bubble bath...

or a hot shower. Soaking in a warm tub or standing under a steamy stream about 75 to 90 minutes before bedtime can be helpful, as “the warm water initially raises your body temperature, and then as the water cools down, that helps promote sleep onset,” Silverman explains. Studies suggest that you sleep more soundly when your body temperature is cooler.

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4

Use your imagination.

A short nature meditation before bed can help create peaceful feelings that may help lull you to sleep. Close your eyes and spend a moment visualizing a calming, pleasant environment such as a forest, a beach, or a mountain scene. Focus on slowing your breathing as you immerse yourself in the imagined picture, thinking about each of the five senses—what do you see, hear, smell, etc.? Pleasant imagery before drifting off may help calm the mind, and in turn the body, to ease transition to sleep, says Silverman.

+ Still struggling to catch zzz's? Explore natural sleep aids at prevention.com/natural-sleep-aid-tips.