

March

Weekly Wellness Tips

Week 1

Why Sleep Deserves a Spot on Your Priority List

March is national sleep awareness month. Sleeping well is a key pillar of health that often takes a backseat to busy schedules, endless to-do lists, and late-night scrolling. But here's the truth: getting enough rest is one of the most powerful things you can do to give the world the best of you...not what's left of you!

Sleep impacts several dimensions of wellness, from mental clarity and emotional balance to immune function and physical recovery. **Chronic sleep deprivation can contribute to stress, fatigue, and long-term health risks.**

Why Sleep Should Be At The Top Of Your Priority List:

- **Boosts cognitive function:** A well-rested mind sharpens focus, improves memory, and enhances decision-making for peak performance.
- **Improves physical health:** Sleep supports immune function, heart health, and muscle recovery. Chronic deprivation is associated with a higher risk of conditions like heart disease and diabetes.
- **Supports mental well-being:** Quality rest improves emotional regulation, reducing stress, irritability, and anxiety. A well-rested brain is better equipped to handle daily challenges.

If you're skimping on sleep, small changes can make a big difference. **Over the next few weeks, you'll learn actionable steps** to improve your wind-down routine, create a restful environment, and consume foods that promote better ZZZs. Sweet dreams start now!



Week 2

Struggling to fall asleep? Try this tonight...

Sleep hygiene includes the practices that set you up for a restful night's snooze. If you find yourself tossing and turning or waking up groggy, it's time to implement consistent bedtime habits that help you drift off faster and wake up feeling refreshed.

Sleep Hygiene Strategies For Optimal ZZZ's:

- **Stick to a schedule:** Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (yes, even on weekends!) regulates your internal clock and improves sleep quality. Aim for at least seven to nine hours of quality shuteye to allow your body to complete full sleep cycles.
- **Declutter:** A messy bedroom can increase stress levels and make it harder for your brain to associate the space with rest. Limit work-related materials, put laundry away, and ensure your bed is comfortable to promote mental clarity and relaxation.
- **Power down before bed:** Blue light from screens blocks melatonin, the hormone that tells your body it's time to sleep. Swap screen time for a low-light activity (e.g., reading, journaling) at least 30 to 60 minutes before bed.
- **Practice relaxation techniques:** Stress and anxiety are common culprits of poor sleep. Try guided meditation or deep breathing exercises before bed to calm your mind. One simple technique is box breathing: inhale for four seconds, hold for four, exhale for four, and hold for four before repeating.
- **Time your meals strategically:** Eating a heavy meal close to bedtime can lead to acid reflux, bloating, and poor digestion, keeping you awake. Finish eating at least two to three hours before bedtime and take a post-dinner stroll to aid digestion and sleep comfortably.
- **Hydrate wisely:** Hydration is important, but loading up on fluids too close to bedtime can result in multiple trips to the bathroom, disrupting your sleep cycles. Try to front-load water intake earlier in the day and taper off in the evening.

No matter if you need five hours of sleep or eight, the key is getting good, refreshing rest. According to Dr. Virend Somers, a cardiologist who specializes in sleep disorders, how much sleep a person needs varies from person to person. However, there are some simple tips that everyone can use to improve their sleep quality. Watch this Mayo Clinic video to help you get better ZZZ's tonight: https://youtu.be/fjVA_mmFmxU?si=c-ugFQkGmiDyVYZ3



Week 3

Turn Your Bedroom Into a Sleep Sanctuary

Your bedroom should be a sleep sanctuary—a space that signals rest, relaxation, and recovery. If you're tossing and turning, your sleep setup might be the problem. A cool, dark, quiet, and comfortable environment is crucial for deep, restorative sleep.

How To Optimize Your Bedroom For Better Sleep:

- **Keep it cool:** Your body temperature naturally drops at night, so a cooler room (between 60 to 67°F/15.6 to 19.4°C) helps signal bedtime. If you tend to overheat, try breathable sheets or a cooling mattress topper.
- **Block out light:** Even small amounts of light (e.g., a blinking phone, streetlamps, nightlights) can interfere with melatonin production and trick your brain into thinking it's still daytime. Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask to eliminate light sources.
- **Reduce noise:** Sudden sounds, like traffic or notifications, can disrupt deep sleep. Using a white noise machine, fan, or earplugs can help drown out distractions.
- **Upgrade your sleep setup:** An old mattress or unsupportive pillows can lead to poor sleep posture and discomfort. If you wake up sore or achy, it may be time for an upgrade.
- **Use an alarm clock:** Blue light from screens can keep your brain wired. Try charging your phone outside the bedroom and using an alarm clock instead.

Take a five-minute audit of your bedroom. What's one thing you can tweak to create a more restful environment? Simple changes—like dimming the lights earlier or switching to breathable bedding—can lead to big improvements in sleep quality!

Monthly Challenge: Try a new sleep tweak each week over the next month and track which ones help you make the most of your night! Sweet dreams!



Week 4

Can what you eat affect your sleep?

Certain foods and beverages contain natural sleep-promoting compounds that help you fall asleep faster and rest more soundly. Meanwhile, some can have the opposite effect, keeping you wired when you should be winding down.

Sleep-Supporting Foods & Drinks

- **Magnesium-rich foods:** Magnesium helps relax muscles and calm the nervous system. Try almonds, bananas, spinach, pumpkin seeds, or avocado for a natural sleep boost.
- **Tart cherries:** These are one of the few natural sources of melatonin. Enjoy a small serving of tart cherry juice or whole cherries in the evening.
- **Fatty fish:** Salmon, tuna, and mackerel are rich in omega-3s and vitamin D, which help regulate serotonin and support sleep.
- **Warm milk:** Milk contains tryptophan, an amino acid that helps your body produce melatonin and serotonin (relaxation hormone).
- **Herbal teas:** Chamomile, valerian root, peppermint, and lavender teas are naturally caffeine-free and have calming properties for relaxation.

Sleep-Disrupting Foods & Drink

- **Caffeine:** Coffee, energy drinks, and chocolate contain caffeine, which can stay in your system for up to eight hours. Try cutting these off by 2 PM to avoid tossing and turning.
- **Alcohol:** While it may make you feel sleepy initially, alcohol can disrupt deep sleep and lead to frequent wakeups during the night.
- **Spicy or heavy meals:** These can cause indigestion and acid reflux, making it harder to get comfortable. Try eating at least two to three hours before bed.

This week, add one sleep-friendly food or drink to your evening routine and pay attention to how it affects your rest quality and energy the next day!

Please note, if you've tried the sleep tips throughout Sleep Awareness Month but still find yourself struggling with sleep, it's important to consider other potential factors such as hormonal imbalances or underlying health issues. In such cases, seeking guidance from a healthcare professional is recommended so they can provide you with personalized advice and solutions to help you get a better night sleep.

Despite being a cornerstone of well-being, sleep is often pushed to the backburner due to personal and professional commitments. We hope that as National Sleep Awareness month wraps up that you make sleeping well a priority in your life. And that the sleep tips provided during the past few weeks will help you to get the better ZZZ's you need, so you can give the world the best of you...not what's left of you!

