



8 Steps to Better Sleep





Today we will focus on

Why sleep is important

What happens while you sleep?

Key factors for sleep

Our 8 top tips for a good night's sleep



What's your sleep struggle?



Who has trouble getting to sleep?

Who has trouble staying asleep?

Who often looks at their mobile phone in bed?

Who regularly feels fatigued during the day?



You are not alone – sleep stats



- Worldwide **62% of adults** feel they don't sleep well when they go to bed
- **Women are 40%** more likely to have insomnia
- Large study cites **Finns as the world's best sleepers** and Japanese as the worst!
- **46% of people** look at their phone as the last thing they do before falling asleep



What *is* normal?





So how much do we need?

- Almost one third of our lives is spent sleeping (or trying to!)
- The amount of sleep you need is individual & varies at certain life stages
- Lack of sleep creates a 'sleep debt' or a 'sleep deficit'

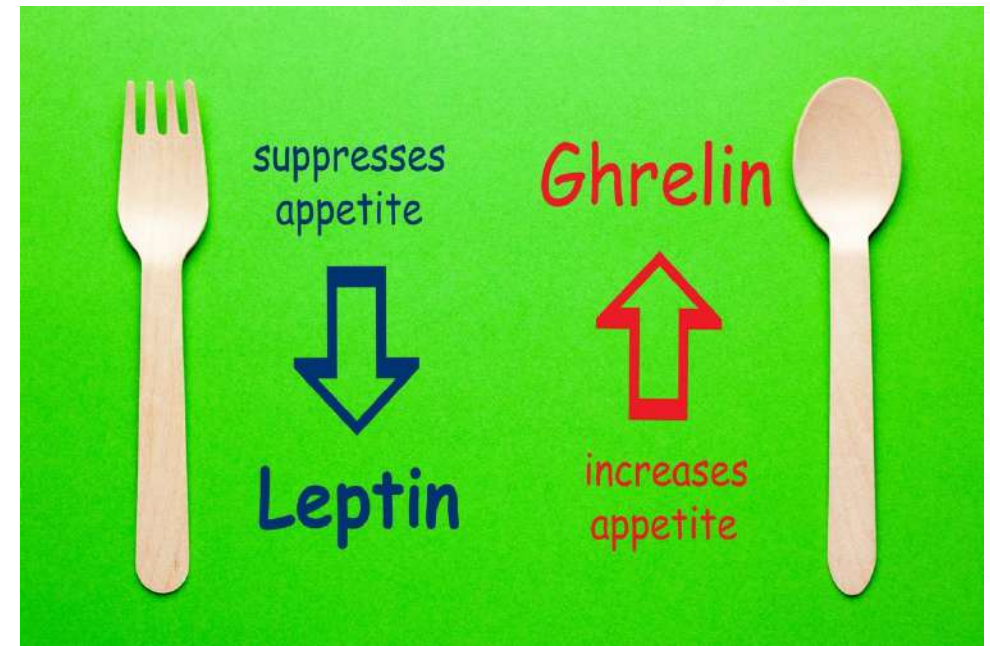




Why is sleep so important?

Not just feeling better after a good night's sleep! Sleep plays a crucial role in:

- Metabolism, appetite and insulin control
- Cardiovascular function
- Memory and learning
- Mood and attention
- Healing and repair
- Immune function





Sleep and brain health



- Sleep deprivation affects cognitive function
- Essential for consolidating memories
- Sleep disruption is linked with neurodegenerative disease
- Cleaning the brain!

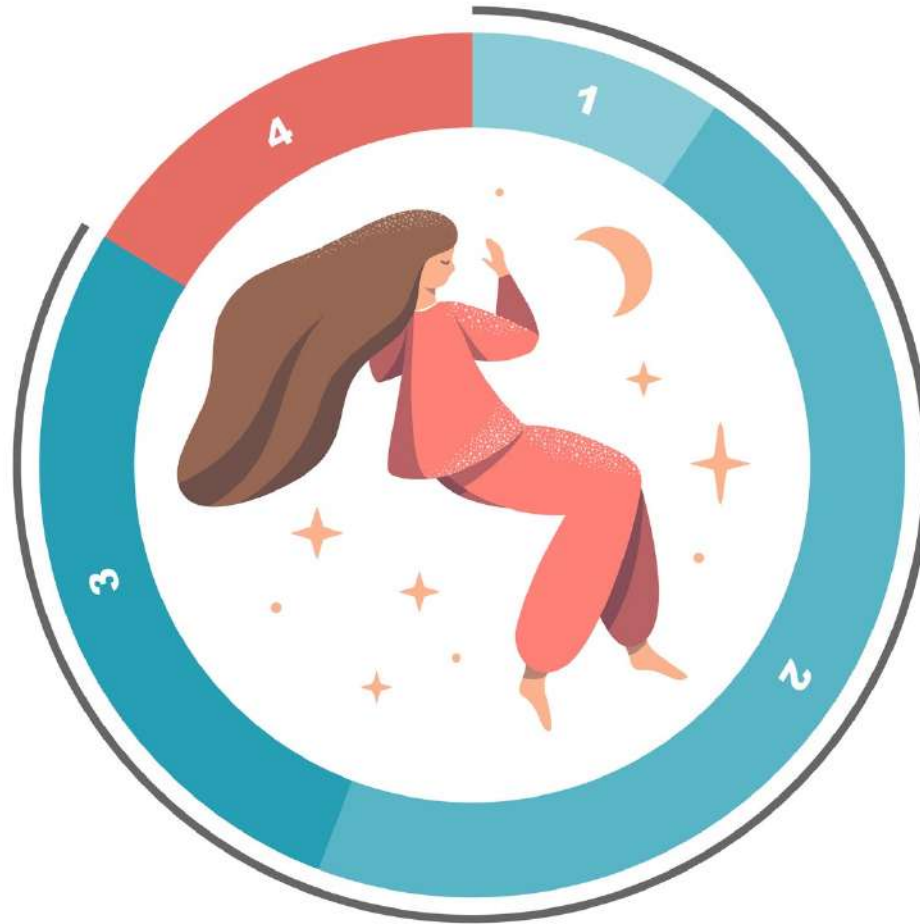


Sleep and immune function

- Lack of sleep affects our ability to fight off infection
 - <5 hours sleep = 4.5 x more likely to develop a cold
 - 7 hours = least likely
- Sleep helps our immune T Cells function better (fight viruses)



Sleep Cycle Stages



SLEEP STAGES

1 lightest sleep

2 light sleep

3 deep sleep

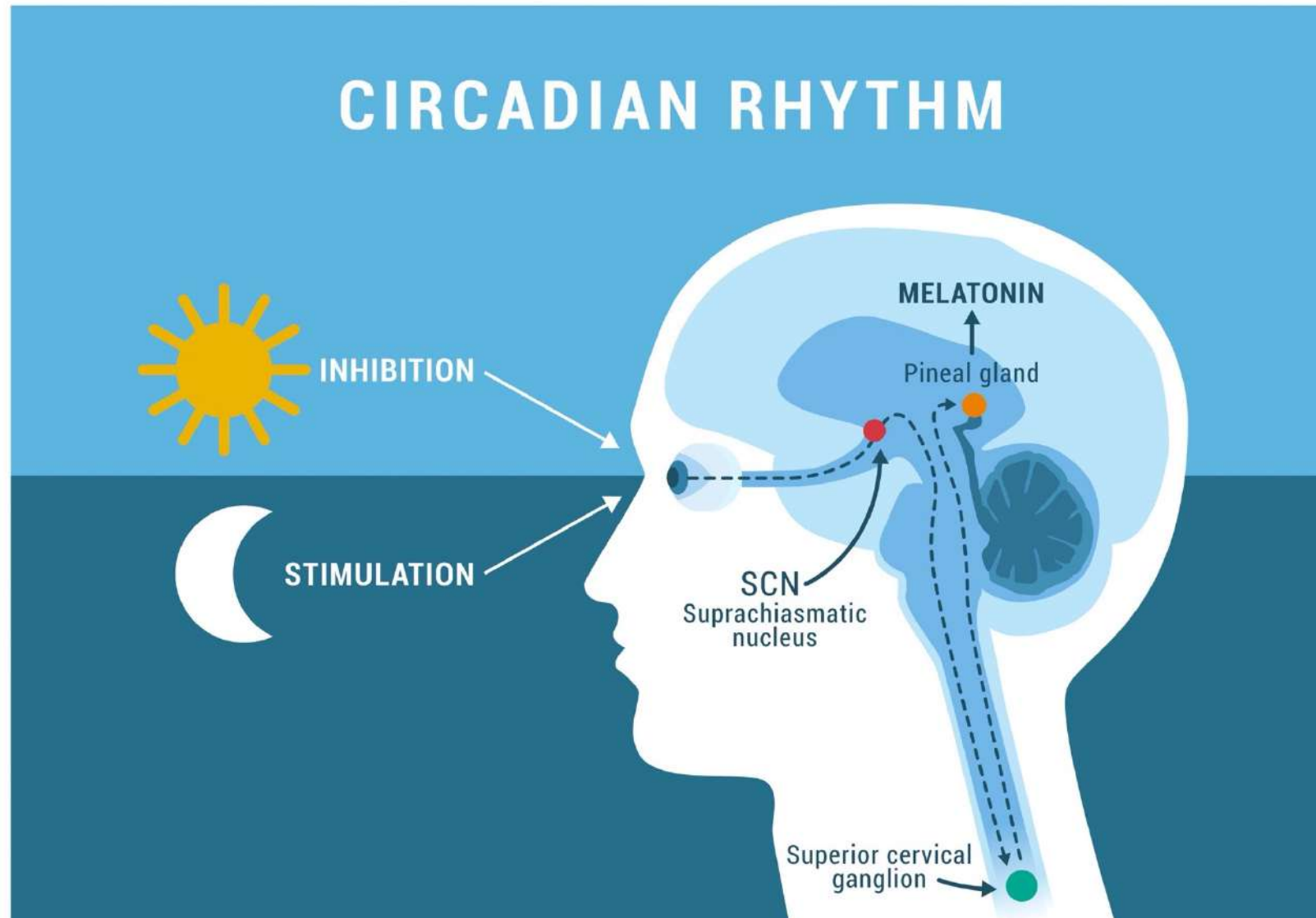
4 REM

— Non - rem sleep

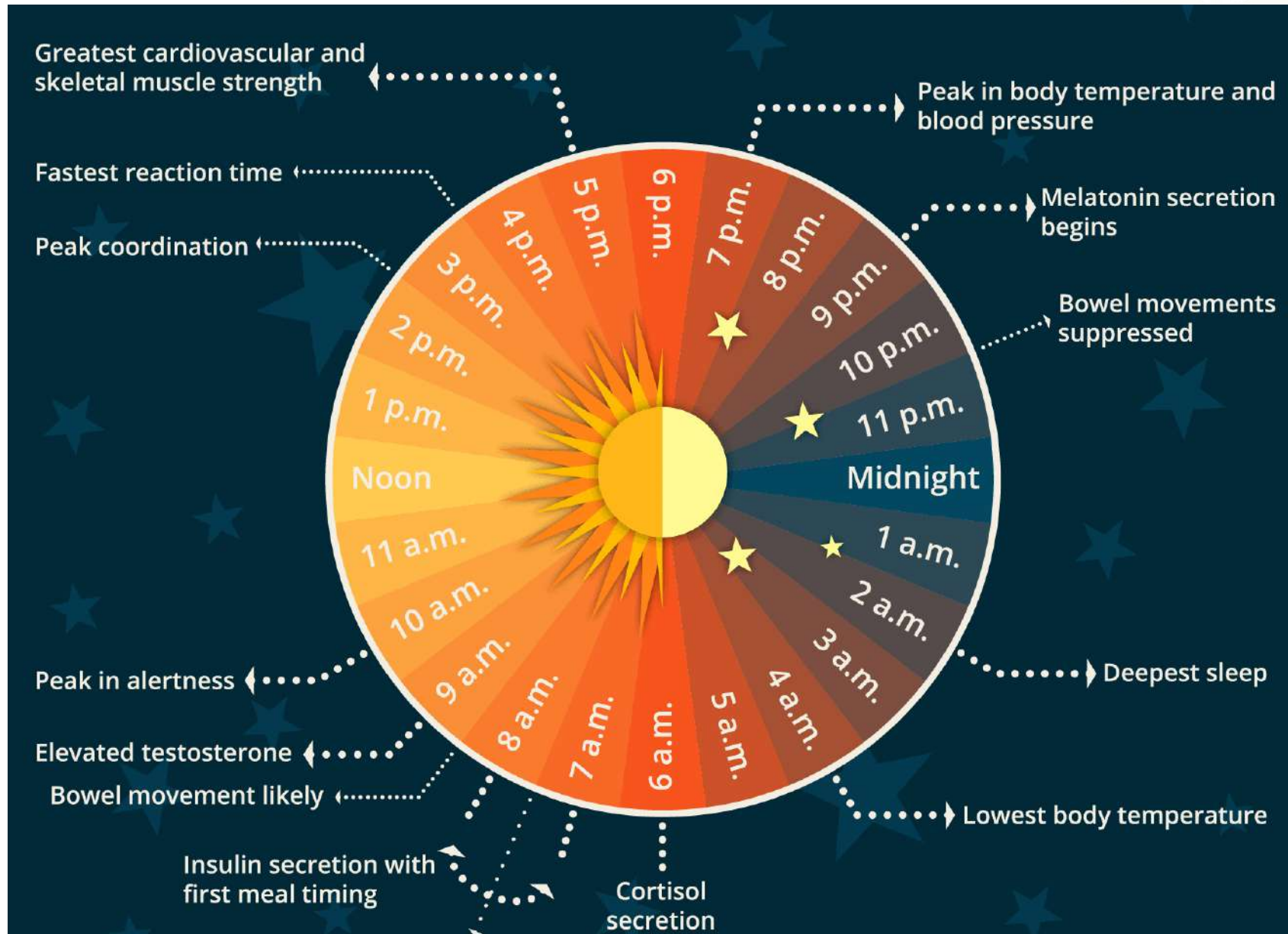


Key factors for sleep





Body Clock



8 Top tips for a good night's sleep

1. Practise good sleep hygiene
2. Target stress
3. Balance your plate
4. Include tryptophan rich foods
5. Ditch the stimulants
6. Cut back on alcohol
7. Exercise
8. Support digestion





1. Check sleep hygiene

- Natural light in the morning or try a light box
- Sleep in a darkened room
- Evaluate the comfort of mattress & pillows
- Go to bed and wake up around the same time or not!
- Bedroom temperature
- Ditch the electronics!



Screen time disrupts circadian rhythm



- 2-4 hours before bed start blue-blocking
 - Try blue light blocking glasses
 - Set night-time mode on screens
- Dim lighting in the house
- Switch to low-blue amber coloured lights or use anti-blue light filters

2. Embrace stress management



- Breathing exercises eg. Body scan technique, abdominal breathing or 4,7,8 breathing
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Reading books not watching screens
- Hot baths – lower core body temperature
- Ear plugs – quieten your environment
- Boundaries and breaks
- Try aromatherapy using essential oils
- Watch less news

4:6 Breathing

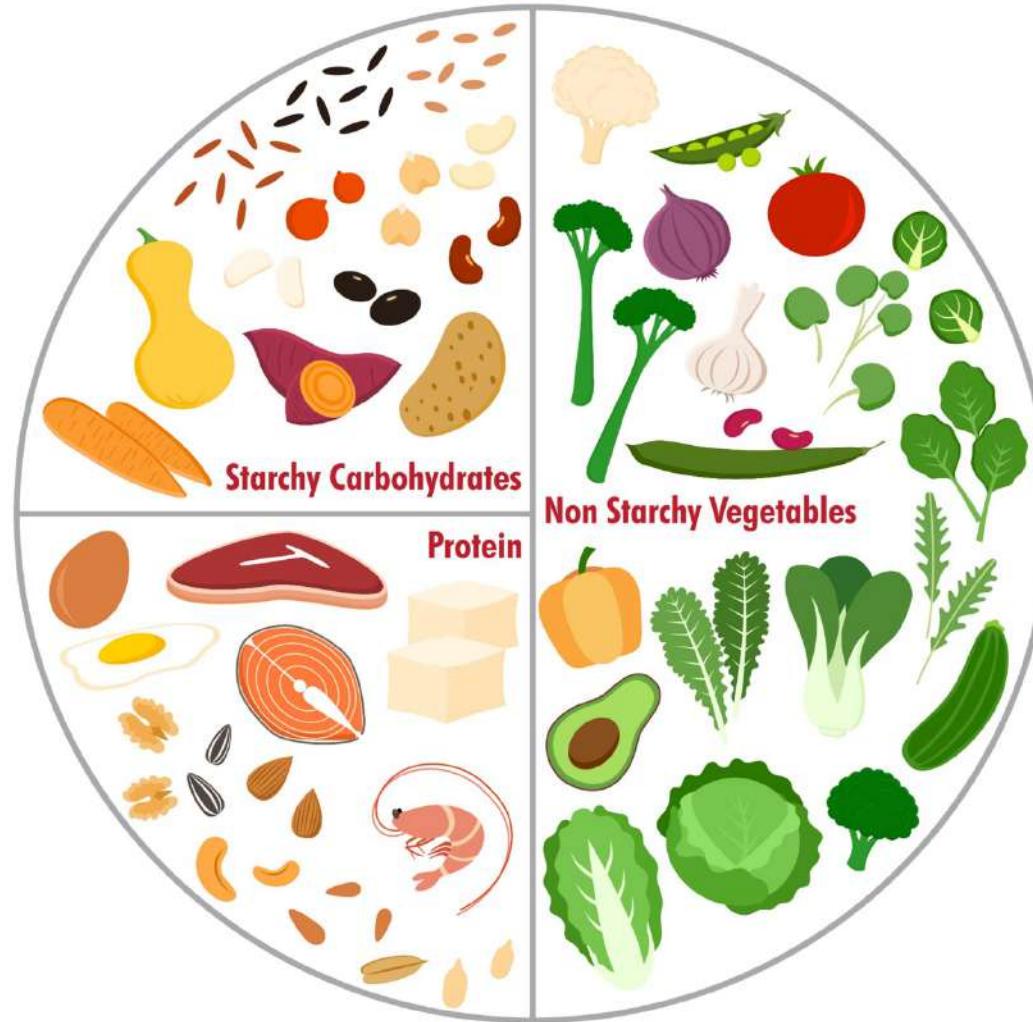
1. Sit comfortably in your chair
2. Close your eyes, if comfortable
3. Feel your feet grounded into the floor (relaxed), arms resting by your side
4. Gently **breathe in** through your nose, feeling your belly and diaphragm rise, to a **count of 4**
5. Gently **breathe out** through your nose, feeling your belly and diaphragm deflate, to a **count of 6**

Magnesium: nature's tranquiliser

- Almonds, cashews, pecans
 - Wholegrains - oats, buckwheat, quinoa
 - Leafy green vegetables
 - Legumes - lentils, beans, chickpeas
 - Dark chocolate (+70%)
-
- Magnesium bath / foot soak



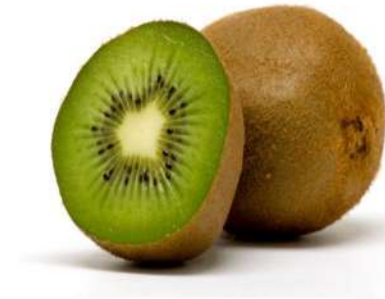
3. Eat a well-balanced plate





Bedtime snacks

- Oatcakes with any 100% nut butter or other protein e.g., cottage cheese
- Kiwi fruit - 1 or 2
- Small handful of walnuts or almonds
- Small bowl of porridge topped with flaxseed or nuts
- Montmorency sour cherry juice – drizzled on yoghurt or porridge



4. Regular tryptophan-rich foods

- Meat – chicken breast, turkey, beef, lamb
- Fish – shellfish, halibut, mackerel, cod
- Shellfish – lobster, prawns, crayfish, oysters
- Legumes – butter / kidney beans, black beans, lentils
- Grains - whole oats, buckwheat
- Cheese – parmesan, mozzarella, cottage cheese
- Eggs
- Bananas
- Nuts & seeds – chia, sesame, flax, sunflower, pistachios, cashews, almonds, hazelnuts



5. Reduce caffeine



- Raises stress hormones - cortisol & adrenaline
- Disrupts our natural sleep-wake cycle - blocks the action of adenosine
- Can take up to 10 hours to completely clear caffeine from the bloodstream



And don't forget other stimulants

Avoid:

- Chocolate
- Cigarettes
- Soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Non-herbal teas
- Diet pills
- Check medications for caffeine





6. The myth of alcohol-induced sleep

Have you noticed you don't sleep well after you've had a few drinks?

- Prevents deep sleep
- Creates blood sugar imbalances
- Suppresses serotonin



7. Fresh air & exercise



- A natural boost to serotonin levels
- Outside exercise boosts endorphins & serotonin further
- Exercise improves sleep quality – but best not too close to bedtime



8. Support Digestion

Gut Microbiota

- Approx. 90% of the body's serotonin is produced in the digestive tract...
- So, it's vital to keep our gut happy!





Avoid heavy meals before bed

- Big & highly-refined / fatty meals fire up metabolism
- Body works hard to digest the food
- Lying down - interferes with digestion causing acid reflux - heartburn & indigestion





Other tactics - power nap?





Heavy or weighted blanket



Additional Resources

Top Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

1. Daylight
Spend time in daylight during the day to boost your body's natural rhythm of sleep.

2. Drink Stimulants
Caffeine, alcohol, and drugs can interfere with your sleep. Avoid them in the evening.

3. Balance Blood Sugars
Avoid a large meal in the evening as it can raise blood sugar levels. Instead, opt for a small, balanced meal.

4. Exercise
Exercise regularly during the day to help you fall asleep at night.

5. Good Sleep Hygiene
Make your bedroom a sleep-friendly environment by keeping it cool, dark, and quiet.

6. How Much to Eat and When
Eat a meal of food 2-3 hours before you sleep. Avoid heavy meals and alcohol in the evening.

7. Sleep-Friendly Foods
Foods containing magnesium, tryptophan, or melatonin can help you sleep better.

8. Relaxation Techniques
Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation to help you fall asleep.

9. Sleep-Friendly Bed
Invest in a good quality mattress and pillows to support your body.

10. Sleep-Friendly Routine
Establish a consistent bedtime routine to help your body know when it's time to sleep.

Supporting Sleep Hygiene
Visit www.superwellness.co.uk for more tips.

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Angela Steel

22 Tasty, healthy and easy recipes

The recipe section from 'Eat Your Way to the Top' - in full colour

Mediterranean halloumi & quinoa salad

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 150g halloumi, cut into cubes
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup baby spinach or mixed leaves, roughly chopped
- 1 cucumber, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 cup mint, chopped
- 1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 10g sunflower seeds

Method

Cook the quinoa in boiling water according to packet instructions, generally 10-12 minutes. Drain, wash and place in a serving bowl to cool.

Pat the halloumi slices dry with a kitchen towel and fry for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden. Remove from the heat and set aside. Roughly chop the quinoa. Add the chopped vegetables.

To make the dressing, whisk the olive oil, balsamic vinegar and lemon juice and drizzle over the quinoa. Mix gently until combined. Top with the chopped herbs and sunflower seeds and serve.

Will keep in the fridge for 2 days.

www.superwellness.co.uk

NUTRITION TIPS FOR SHIFT WORKERS

Our body is regulated by its circadian rhythm, which means it's programmed differently throughout a 24-hour cycle. Disrupting this rhythm can have an impact on metabolic, digestive, heart and mental health. The good news is that you can significantly reduce the health risks and improve your general wellbeing and energy levels by implementing these tips.

TIMING

- Aim for three satisfying meals across a 24-hour period.
- Eat your main meal in the earlier part of the evening to fuel your body.
- Avoid an excessive snack between midnight and dawn.
- Avoid large meals for 4-6 hours prior to sleep.
- Eat breakfast before 9am to help kickstart your metabolism.
- Stick to a consistent sleep schedule of 7-9 hours.

NIGHT SHIFT SURVIVAL KIT

- Coffee bag (1-2 cups)
- Energy bars, fruit, or a small meal
- Water bottle
- Dark sunglasses
- Blackout curtains
- White noise machine

FOOD & HYDRATION

- Hydration is a common cause for fatigue.
- Tip water throughout your shift and aim for 1.5-2 litres every 24 hours.
- Choose whole or green tea instead of coffee to give your body a gentle boost without stress hormones.
- Take your own food with you to avoid temptation.
- Choose whole foods, including lean protein, eggs, nuts, and vegetables. Avoid fast food, sugary drinks, and alcohol.

EXERCISE

- At least 150 minutes moderate aerobic activity and 2x strength training sessions a week.
- Exercise just before your shift is emerging.

SLEEP & RELAXATION

- Find a technique that works for you: breathing, meditation, yoga.
- Minimise blue light and screen time before bed.

HEALTH CHECKS

- Regular health checks can help identify any issues early.
- Regular blood pressure checks can help identify any issues early.

USEFUL EQUIPMENT

- A powerful blender
- A slow cooker for home meals
- Insulated or flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle
- Food scale
- Lunch box

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Oaty almond & cherry cookies

Makes around 16 cookies

Ingredients

- 150g ground almonds
- 150g almond meal
- 150g soft butter
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 75g dried cherries

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C and line 2 baking sheets with parchment.

In a bowl add the ground almonds and oats. Sift the flour and baking powder together and add to the almond mixture.

In a separate bowl add the coconut oil, maple syrup and egg. Add to the dry ingredients and combine until you have a sticky dough. Add the cherries and mix well.

Divide the mixture into tablespoon sized balls and place on the baking tray. Bake in the oven until starting to brown, around 12 minutes.

Store in an airtight container.

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Stewed cinnamon apples

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 apples, cored and chopped (leaving the skin on for extra fibre)
- 100g ground cinnamon (or 1 cinnamon stick)
- 1 litre water (approx.)
- 100g raisins, depending on how juicy the apples are

Method

Put the ingredients in a saucepan and cook, covered, over low heat and simmer, around 20-25 minutes. Check regularly to make sure the apples don't stick to the bottom of the pan.

Divide the stew into 4 portions and serve. Top with a dusting of sugar or honey.

Will keep for a few days in the fridge or you can freeze in individual portions for later.

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Further info...

Breathing techniques:

Sleep support -

- Abdominal breathing or diaphragmatic breathing
- Body scan technique

Calming / support anxiety -

- Box breathing
- 4-7-8 breathing

Caffeine free teas with herbs to support sleep:

- Yogi-Tea – Bedtime
- Pukka – Night-time
- Clipper – Snore & Peace

Think it might be more serious?

Sleep Apnoea

STOPBang Questionnaire:

https://britishsnoring.co.uk/stop_bang_questionnaire.php

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS)

- Get deficiencies checked
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine & nicotine
- Ensure your exercising

Book recommendations:

- Nick Littlehales: *Sleep* (Elite sports sleep coach and fan of naps!)
- Dr Lindsay Browning: *Navigating Sleeplessness: How to Sleep Deeper and Better for Longer* (Sleep expert & Psychologist)



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