



Sleep, along with nutrition and exercise, is one of the pillars of overall health and is crucial for recovery from physical training. Here are some of the best suggestions I've found to help you get and stay asleep. "Sleep On It" is also part of the "IT Program (Independent Training)," which offers short but powerful solutions for enhancing your mental and physical well-being.

**Quality Sleep**

**Establish a Consistent Sleep Schedule:**

**Establish a Consistent Sleep Schedule:** Maintain a regular sleep-wake cycle to regulate your body's internal clock. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends, to synchronize your body's natural sleep-wake rhythm for

**Optimize Exposure to Natural Light:**

**Optimize Exposure to Natural Light:** Get exposure to natural light during the day, especially in the morning, to help regulate your circadian rhythm. Spend time outdoors in the morning or near windows to receive ample daylight, which supports your body's internal clock and improves sleep quality by regulating melatonin production. I use a light therapy lamp during parts of the year when I awake. These devices are used to treat conditions like Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and other mood disorders by mimicking natural sunlight.

**Create a Comfortable Sleep Environment:**

**Create a Comfortable Sleep Environment:** Ensure your bedroom is cool, dark, and quiet to promote restful sleep. Use comfortable bedding and pillows.

**Limit Exposure to Screens Before Bed (Stop 15 minutes Before Bed)**

**Limit Exposure to Screens Before Bed:** Avoid using electronic devices with screens (phones, tablets, computers) at least an hour before bedtime, or use blue light filters to reduce interference with your natural sleep cycle..

**Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine:**

**Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine:** Develop a calming pre-sleep routine such as reading a book, taking a warm bath, or practicing relaxation exercises.

**Journaling Before Bed:**

**Journaling Before Bed:** Spend a few minutes writing in a journal to unload thoughts, jot down tasks for the next day, or reflect on positive experiences. This can help clear your mind and reduce bedtime anxiety.

**Consider Temperature Regulation:**

**Consider Temperature Regulation:** Keep your bedroom cool (around 60-67°F or 15-20°C) and experiment with bedding and clothing for comfort.

**Watch Your Diet and Avoid Stimulants (Stop 4-6 Hours Before Bed):**

**Watch Your Diet and Avoid Stimulants (Stop 4-6 Hours Before Bed):** Avoid heavy meals, caffeine, and nicotine close to bedtime as they can disrupt sleep patterns.

**Use Light and Dark Cycles:**

**Use Light and Dark Cycles:** In the evening, minimize exposure to bright lights and use dim lighting to signal to your body that it's time to wind down.

**Avoid Late-night Eating (Stop 2-3 Hours Before Bed):**

**Avoid Late-night Eating (Stop 2-3 Hours Before Bed):** Limit heavy meals and large amounts of liquids close to bedtime to prevent discomfort and promote better sleep.

**Limit Alcohol Before Bed (Stop 3-4 Hours Before Bed):**

**Limit or No Alcohol Before Bed (Stop 3-4 Hours Before Bed):** While alcohol may initially make you feel sleepy, it can disrupt sleep patterns and reduce sleep quality later in the night.

**Use Sleep Aids Wisely:**

**Use Sleep Aids Wisely:** Consult with a healthcare provider before using over-the-counter sleep aids or supplements, as some may interfere with sleep quality or have side effects.

**Falling and Staying Asleep**

**Use Visualization:**

**Use Visualization:** Imagine a peaceful and relaxing scene, such as lying on a beach or walking through a forest, to help distract your mind from worries and stress.

**Sleep Affirmations:**

**Sleep Affirmations:** Use positive affirmations to create a mental environment conducive to sleep. Repeat calming phrases like "I am relaxed and ready for sleep" or "My body knows how to sleep well."

**Establish a Wind-Down Routine:**

**Establish a Wind-Down Routine:** Mentally prepare for sleep by engaging in relaxing activities like reading a book, listening to soothing music, or practicing gentle yoga.

**Limit Worry Time/Do Not Problem Solve Before Bed or when trying to sleep:**

**Limit Worry Time:** Set aside a specific time earlier in the day to address worries or solve problems, rather than doing so right before bed. This allows your mind to process and resolve concerns earlier, reducing the likelihood of racing thoughts and anxiety interfering with your ability to fall asleep. Instead, use relaxation techniques or engage in calming activities before bed to promote a restful transition to sleep.

**Practice Gratitude:**

**Practice Gratitude:** Reflect on positive events from the day before going to bed. This can improve your mood and reduce anxiety, leading to better sleep continuity.

**Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT):**

**Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT):** This approach encourages accepting rather than fighting wakefulness. If you wake up in the middle of the night, focus on relaxing your body and accepting that you're awake without stressing about it.

**Mental Exercises:**

**Mental Exercises:** If you wake up and can't fall back asleep, engage in a quiet mental activity like counting backward from 100, listing things you're grateful for, or repeating a calming word or phrase.

**Break the Cycle of Rumination:**

**Break the Cycle of Rumination:** If you wake up and start to worry or ruminate, try to gently redirect your thoughts to something neutral or positive. Techniques such as focusing on your breathing or visualizing a relaxing scene can help.

**Limit Stimulating Mentally Activities Before Bed:**

**Limit Stimulating Mentally Activities Before Bed:** Avoid engaging in mentally stimulating activities, such as work or intense conversations, close to bedtime.

**Also Helpful**

**Manage Stress and Anxiety:**

**Manage Stress and Anxiety:** Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation to calm your mind before bed.

**Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:**

**Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:** Incorporate mindfulness practices or gentle yoga stretches before bed to relax your body and mind.

**Exercise Regularly:**

**Exercise Regularly:** Engage in regular physical activity during the day, but avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime (Stop 2-3 Hours Before Bed).

**Summary:**

By prioritizing these strategies and observing the recommended times to stop certain activities, you can create an environment and habits that support better sleep quality and overall health.