



HealthyBodyHealthyLife
with *Melissa Koerner*

Total Transformation Module 4 – Part 2: Action Steps to Get a Good Night's Sleep

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Step #1: Get to Bed at the Same Time Every Night

- The more **consistent** your sleep/wake cycle, the more consistent your body will **function**.
- To determine your ideal bedtime, **subtract** 7.5 hours from the time you need to get up.
- Remember, on average we need **7.5 hours** (5 cycles X 90 minutes = 450 mins./60min. = 7.5 hrs.)
- Ideally, you want to wake up **without** an alarm – this allows your natural circadian rhythm to come thru.
- Go to bed when **naturally** feel tired and wake up when naturally want to wake up – this is your *cronotype*.

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You can create a dysfunctional sleep schedule in as little as 7 days:

- If you stay up too late for one week your internal body clock is trained to **wait** till later to start reducing cortisol and increasing melatonin.
- If you're used to going to bed late, you're likely to have **hard time** falling asleep by your ideal bedtime.
- You can **retrain** your body to release melatonin earlier so you can get to sleep on time for the maximum sleep benefits.
- Go to bed earlier in **15-minute** increments.
- It takes about **7 days** to adjust to your natural sleep/wake cycles.

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Step #2: Eat a Balanced Meal for Dinner

- Eating too many carbs and not enough fat and protein with dinner can lead to **nighttime hypoglycemia**, which is a blood sugar crash in the middle of the night.
 - Triggers the release of **stress hormones** causing you wake generally between 1am and 3am.
 - Your brain considers low blood sugar an **emergency**—a major stressor.
 - Once you're awake, it's difficult to fall back asleep, and if you do the quality of your sleep is poor.
 - You may need to **increase** your fat and protein intake or **avoid** carbs altogether before bed.
- Be mindful of the **amounts** of food you eat.
 - You need to **test** how much you can eat before bed.
 - Ideally, you want to be done eating **3 hours** before bedtime, but don't go to bed hungry either.

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Step #3: Detox from MSM At Least 90 Minutes Before Bed

- The news is mostly **negative** and watching triggers your stress response system.
- It's common to have vivid dreams and **nightmares** watching something negative before bed.
- If you do watch TV, make it something **light, fun** and **inspirational**.

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Step #4: Avoid Stimulants and Depressants

- Consuming coffee, soda, caffeinated teas, alcohol and sugary snacks before bed is NOT a good idea.
 - These stimulants create a spike and fall in your blood sugar, which triggers cortisol, signaling to your brain it's time for action and waking you up later into the night..
 - If you are already stressed out, adding caffeine to the mix only increases stress hormones even more and disrupts sleep quality.
 - If you're going to drink coffee, drink it no later than lunchtime—it has a half life of 6 hours
 - Alcohol, while making you feel sleepy, does NOT allow for quality rest, which in turn will make you feel even more stressed if you have a hangover the next day.
 - It also makes you less able to fight viruses.
 - Coffee and alcohol are diuretics, making you wake up dehydrated.

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Step #5: Reduce Your Exposure to Blue Wavelength Light

- A big sleep disruptor is exposure to blue wavelength light.
- Different wavelengths of light have been shown to affect human physiology and sleep cycles in different ways.
- Blue light, a short-wavelength light, has been singled out as being more significantly disruptive to sleep than other colors on the light spectrum
- Research has shown blue light **delays** release of the sleep hormone melatonin, disrupts sleep/wake cycles, and may influence negative changes to mood.

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Step #5: Reduce Your Exposure to Blue Wavelength Light

- Sources of blue light are high-efficiency light bulbs, and digital devices like computers, TV's, iPhones and iPads.
- Reduce your exposure to these electronic devices at least two hours before bedtime.
- Tips:
 - Download f.lux to your computer if you need to use your computer later during the day (It makes the color of your computer's display adapt to the time of day, warm at night and like sunlight during the day.)
 - Use blue light blocking glasses to help you wind down and produce melatonin on the right schedule.

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Step #6: Reduce Your Exposure to Bright Lights

- Better night lights:
 - To create relaxing mood lighting you can use natural beeswax candles
 - You can also use low-wattage yellow, orange, or red light bulbs if you need a source of light at night
 - The light in these bandwidths does not shut down melatonin production in the way that white and blue bandwidth light does

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Step #7: Unplug Electrical Devices in Your Room

- Electromagnetic pollution from electronic appliances prevent many people from sleeping well
- If your sleep improves when you unplug electrical devices, but you need to keep some of them in your bedroom try rearranging them as far away from the bed as possible—at least three feet away

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Step #8: Make Your Bedroom Dark, Quiet and Relaxing

- It should remind you of a cave
 - A dark bedroom signals your brain it's time to sleep
 - Cover your windows and all light-emitting devices (alarm clock, fire alarm, TV signal etc.)—the smallest amount of light can wake some people
 - The most common cause of premature waking is exposure to light from streetlights, headlights, and the moon
- Use ear plugs if you sleep with someone who snores
- Use an essential oil diffuser in your bedroom with lavender oil

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Step #9: Use Your Bed for Sleep and Sex

- Don't bring screens to bed and don't watch TV in bed
- Remember, the blue in your electronic screens interferes with melatonin (sleep hormone) production
- Resist sending those last emails or watching a violent movie while in bed
- One of the worst barriers to sleep is watching the nightly news

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Step #10: Get 30 Minutes of Outdoor Time

- Get at least 30 minutes of outdoor time every day (even if it's not sunny)
- Your circadian system benefits from bright light
 - If possible, get 10 to 15 minutes of morning sunlight
 - It will send a message to your internal clock that daylight has arrived, making it less likely to be confused by weaker light signals during the night
 - If you work indoors, make a point to get outdoors for at least a total of 30-60 minutes during the brightest portion of the day

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Step #11: Stop Drinking Liquids 3 to 4 Hours Before Bed

- When you drink liquids 3-4 hours before bedtime you're likely to awaken to urinate during the night
- Getting up to use the restroom disrupts your sleep cycles, which leads to feeling unrested in the morning
- Make it a habit to drink water first thing in the morning and throughout the day
- When you're hydrated properly you won't be so thirsty right before bed
- If you do wake to use the bathroom, *don't* turn on the light

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Step #12: Allow Fresh Air In

- Keep a window partially open at night—fresh air promotes restful sleep
- Try to keep your room cool—cool air promotes a decline in body temperature, which is critical to restful sleep
- If it's too warm, you may sweat and feel stuffy triggering your stress response and waking you up
- The ideal temperature for sleeping is 60-65 degrees

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Step #13: End your day with a *Power Down Hour*

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Why Create a Power-Down Hour?

- You can't just run into bed feeling anxious or worried, with your task list in your head about what has to get done, your worries of your relationships or whatever else is going on.
- You have to go to bed with the intention of having a rejuvenating, revitalizing sleep.
- During the hour before bedtime train your body to feel **relaxed** and **ready for bed** by doing activities that lower cortisol, body temperature, and blood pressure and boost melatonin.

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Here's an example of how to
structure your *Power Down Hour*...

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1st 15 Minutes: Wrap Up Projects and Plan for Tomorrow

- Set a timer to remind you to stop work or hour projects at least 1 hour before you go to bed.
- Do the dishes, clean up etc.
- Do a “brain dump” to get everything off your mind so these thoughts don’t wake you up in the middle of the night.
- Create a plan for tomorrow.
- Prep-meals or work projects so you’re ready to go in the morning.

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2nd 15 Minutes: Do Your Nightly Hygiene Routine

- Take a hot shower or bath. (Your body temperature decreases when you get out, which helps product melatonin naturally.)
- Use lavender oil on your temples, wrists and feet.
- Brush your teeth.
- Put on PJs.

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3rd 15 Minutes: Do Something Relaxing

(No TV, computer, iPad or iPhone)

- Light exercise: stretching, gentle yoga or Pilates
- Inspirational reading (nothing too engrossing)
- Talk with a friend (keep the conversation upbeat)
- Deep breathing exercises: 4-7-8 breathing; alternate nostril breathing
- Pray or think about positive memories or plans for the future
- Journal: write down 3 wins and/or 3 things you're grateful for; send love to someone who's upset you
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Tip: File unresolved challenges in your "mental filing cabinet" to re-open tomorrow.

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4th 15 Minutes: Meditate

- Benefits of mediation on sleep:
 - Increases melatonin (the sleep hormone)
 - Increases serotonin (precursor of melatonin)
 - Reduces heart rate
 - Decreases blood pressure
 - Activate parts of the brain that control sleep

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Tip:

Set an alarm **1 hour** before your bedtime to remind you to start your *Power Down Hour*.

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Next Up...

Module 4 – Part 3:
Trouble-Shooting Your Sleep Challenges

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