



Crookes
Nutrition & Fitness



THE SLEEP SOLUTION

HOW TO TRANSFORM YOUR SLEEP

AND SKYROCKET YOUR HEALTH

LET'S TALK ABOUT SLEEP

When it comes to working out, you know that what you do in the gym is important. But what you do outside the gym — what you eat, what you drink, and especially how you sleep, is just as crucial. In fact, you must sleep in order for exercise to actually work. Sleep gives your body time to recover, conserve energy, and repair and build up the muscles worked during exercise. When we get enough good quality sleep, the body produces growth hormone. Improving quality of sleep is a big part of the process of achieving your fitness goals, alongside good recovery, as well as optimising your health.

You Can Sleep into Health... Or the other way around

Studies after studies have linked short nights with increased risks of chronic diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular diseases. For example, fewer than 6 hours of sleep per night has been shown to increase low-grade chronic inflammation and insulin resistance, two metabolic processes associated with the development of those health conditions and a worsening of general health and well-being .

Even only one night of poor sleep can provoke negative changes in appetite regulation and food intake.

CAFFEINE & FOOD

Caffeine has a numerous benefits and it is consumed by a large percentage of the population. A single dose of espresso can enhance focus, energy and even boost your sports performance hence why it is often consumed pre-workout or added into pre-workout drinks. However, when consumed late in the day, coffee stimulates your nervous system and may stop your body from naturally relaxing at night. It has been proven that consuming caffeine up to six hours before bed significantly worsened sleep quality. Caffeine can stay elevated in your blood for 6–8 hours. Therefore, drinking large amounts of coffee after 2–3 p.m. is not recommended — especially if you are sensitive to caffeine or have trouble sleeping.



If you do crave a cup of coffee in the late afternoon or evening, stick with decaffeinated coffee. Avoid heavy meals and caffeine later in the day. What you eat can impact how you sleep. Food and alcohol cause heartburn, and caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that can trigger your brain to keep your body active.

LOWER BODY TEMPERATURE

Body and bedroom temperature will profoundly impact sleep quality. As you may have experienced during the summer or in hot locations, it can be very hard to get a good night's sleep when it's too warm. Test different temperatures to find out which is most comfortable for you. Around 70°F (15-20°C) is best for most people. If you pre-set your thermostat so that is the temperature when you go to bed you will see an increase in the quality and the length of your sleep.



CORTISOL

Another thing that disrupts your sleep is making too much cortisol. If you had a very stressful day, for example, you may have received an email that disturbs, you or you could have received really bad news that a family member is sick, it increases cortisol. Sometimes there are days where you feel like you have the weight of the world on your shoulders, and you feel so tense that you can't quiet your mind down. What do you do?

You need to bring down your cortisol ASAP.

Finding something that helps you chill out before bed will be a massive help

Things I use personally is L-Theanine & Chamomile Tea.

L-theanine can improve the quality of sleep by promoting deeper sleep cycles and reducing symptoms of insomnia

Chamomile tea has been associated with improved sleep quality and fewer nighttime awakenings, contributing to more restful sleep

HEALTHY CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Your circadian rhythm helps control your daily schedule for sleep and wakefulness. This rhythm is tied to your 24-hour body clock, and most living things have one. The circadian rhythm is influenced by outside things like light and dark, as well as other factors. Your brain receives signals based on your environment and activates certain hormones, alters your body temperature, and regulates your metabolism to keep you alert or draw you to sleep. Some may experience disruptions to their circadian rhythm because of external factors or sleep disorders. Maintaining healthy habits can help you respond better to this natural rhythm of your body. Hormones like melatonin and cortisol may increase or decrease as part of your circadian rhythm. Melatonin is a hormone that makes you sleepy, and your body releases more of it at night and suppresses it during the day. Cortisol can make you more alert, and your body produces more of it in the morning.

MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT SLEEP SCHEDULE

Focus on maintaining 6-8+hrs of quality undisturbed sleep every night, getting into the habit of setting an earlier bedtime routine and being religious with adhering to this set structure, ideally and removing electrical devices 60 minutes prior to bedtime.

Many assume having a set bedtime will keep their circadian rhythm on track. This isn't the case — it's also important to wake up at the same time every day. A consistent sleep-wake routine will train your master clock to help you avoid waking up throughout the night. Resist the urge to catch up on sleep after a restless night. It's common to want to take a long nap or sleep in on the weekends, but this can make your circadian rhythm worse.

Melatonin usually begins triggering the body to rest around 9 p.m. and starts slowing down (which cues the body to wake up) around 7:30 a.m. Try to orient your sleep schedule around these times with extra time for winding down before bed. If your routine is very different from these times, adjust it slowly in 15-minute increments every few days.

The simple use of ear plugs can improve the quality of your sleep, if you are in a noisy environment. Lowering noises by as little as 30 decibels can have a drastic impact on your sleep quality. White noise, such as a fan however, is acceptable.

GET OUTSIDE IN THE MORNING

Exposure to light in the morning triggers your brain to produce less melatonin. The first thing you should do after your alarm sounds is open the blinds. If you have time, get outside and go for a walk or sip your coffee on the porch. Exposure to sunlight will help reset your internal clock for the day.

SKIP THE AFTERNOON NAP

Staying active throughout the day can help balance your circadian rhythm by using up your energy stores before prime sleeping hours. "If you are having trouble sleeping, taking a nap can decrease your ability to fall asleep at night. The longer you are awake, the more your body will want to sleep toward the end of the day. Whenever you start feeling a dip in your energy, get up and move around. Many of us live sedentary lifestyles due to working behind a desk. Give your body some movement and support your circadian rhythm by moving every 30 minutes. This can wake up your body.



HERE ARE MY TOP TIPS FOR PROMOTING A HEALTHY 24-HOUR SCHEDULE:

- 1▶ Try to **adhere to a routine** each day
- 2▶ Spend time outdoors when it's light outside to **boost your wakefulness**
- 3▶ Get enough daily exercise — **twenty or more minutes of aerobic exercise** is generally recommended
- 4▶ **Sleep in an environment that promotes rest** with proper lighting, a comfortable temperature, and a supportive mattress
- 5▶ **Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine** in the evenings
- 6▶ Power down your screens well before bedtime and try engaging in something such as **reading a book or meditating**
- 7▶ **Do not nap late** in the afternoon or evening.

LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Blue light has a huge impact on your circadian rhythm, tricking your brain into thinking it is still daytime and releasing higher amounts of stress hormones.

This in turn reduces hormones like melatonin, which help you relax and get deep sleep. Electronic devices like smartphones and computers emit large amounts and are worst in this regard.

You can also implement blue light blocking glasses if it necessary for you to spend time in front of the screen in the evening. Blue light-blocking glasses will minimise the negative impact that blue light will have on your sleep quality. In the long they are definitely worth investing in.

ONE THING YOU CAN DO RIGHT AWAY IS:

Turn-off your phone tonight. It's one thing that I can guarantee you will feel the difference the very first day.

CLEAR YOUR MIND

Relaxation techniques before bed have been shown to improve sleep quality and are another great technique. Strategies include listening to relaxing music, reading a book, taking a hot bath, meditating, deep breathing and visualisation. Try out different methods and find what works best for you.

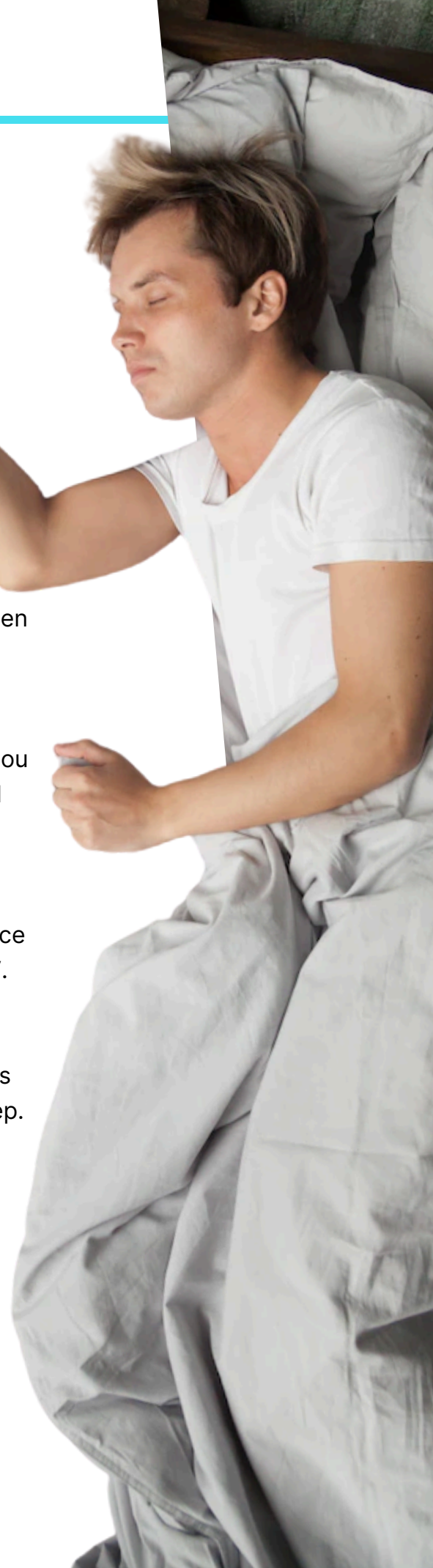
AS DARK AS A CAVE

The room has to be as dark as possible. Melatonin production is an exceptionally sensitive process and even a tiny amount of light can mess it up and impair your sleep. Light is perceived by the skin, so even if you are wearing an eye mask, that light is bothering your sleep. Your skin contains photoreceptors that detect light, if you are not sleeping in total darkness, your pineal gland will decrease the production of melatonin.

To prevent this, make sure you turn off any electronic devices with LED's and cover the lights with a small piece of electrical tape. Yes, even the tiny red dot on your TV. Block off the light over your bedroom window with a towel if light creeps in. Using thick blackout curtains is also a good option, to make sure the room is as black as possible, this will allow you to have a proper nights sleep.

You need to realise that several of your habits can contribute to stimulate your mind before going to bed. Avoid doing things such as;

- Watching TV or playing video games
- Working out too late at night answering emails or texts,
- Leaving your phone next to your bed (putting it on "silent" doesn't fix this)



END THE DAY WITH POSITIVITY

A grateful log is a log in which you write things you are grateful for. It's pretty simple: write down a minimum of 3 things that you are grateful for that day. It's like you're resetting the short term memory in your computer. Here are some questions you can try to answer to get into a grateful mindset:

- ☒ What made me smile today?
- ☒ What made me laugh out hard today?
- ☒ What did I learn today?
- ☒ What was one small victory I had today?
- ☒ What act of kindness did I witness today?
- ☒ What was the best part of the day?
- ☒ What opportunity presented itself today?
- ☒ What did I enjoy listening to, seeing and eating today?
- ☒ Who showed me affection today?
- ☒ What problem was I able to solve today?





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