



*Relax,  
Sleep,  
and Renew*

# Sleep and Better Health

*"Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together."*

*~Thomas Dekker*

When you sleep well, every aspect of your life benefits. This challenge will help you:

1. Focus on relaxing
2. Release the stress of the day
3. Sleep better and longer

You will:

1. Gain awareness of your current sleep routines and how to modify them
2. Practice strategies to relax your mind and body at the end of the day
3. Improve your sleep routine and environment for restful, restorative sleep

## **Personal Growth Challenge**

Better Sleep Bingo gives you ideas to improve your sleep environment and strategies to help you wind down from the day and prepare for sleep.

## **Coworker Connection**

The Group Visualization Board is designed to give you and your coworkers the opportunity to create visual reminders to relax, sleep, and renew your mind and body each night.

A photograph of a person's feet sticking out from under a teal, quilted blanket on a bed. The feet are positioned in the lower-left corner of the frame. The background is a soft-focus view of a bed with white pillows and a teal blanket. The right side of the image features a colorful, abstract graphic design with teal, purple, and yellow shapes, including a large teal circle with a pattern of small teal 'x' marks.

# Why Focus on Improving Our Sleep?

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Sleep Duration  
Changes Your  
Body Energy and  
Stress Levels

As you improve the duration and the quality of your sleep, you will notice that your energy reserves may be restored. You feel an excitement and enthusiasm to go out and do your best. Without adequate sleep, the stress of daily life may leave you feeling overwhelmed. Sleep allows you to renew your energy and approach life with a greater sense of hopefulness and enthusiasm. You will begin to accomplish more each day.

Most adults require between 7 and 8.5 hours of sleep (some people need more and some need less). Some people may need to focus on getting more hours of sleep each night; others may just need to work on the quality of their sleep. Some of you may be sleep pros, and you'll find that out in this challenge.

When you sleep soundly and get enough sleep time:

- Your body recharges and repairs, which helps boost your immune system. As a result, you feel well and are sick less often.
- Sleep also restores tense, sore, or weak muscles.

When you are not getting enough quality sleep time:

- You may feel sluggish or unwell and your energy seems low
- You may find that your thoughts become slower and less positive
- It takes more energy and effort for your brain to recall and absorb information
- Making good decisions becomes more difficult
- You are less attentive to your work and problem-solving





# Your Sleep Hygiene and Why It's Important

Sleep hygiene is defined as behaviors you can do to promote good sleep. Changing your schedule, routine, sleep environment, habits, diet, and/or mindset may improve your ability to go to sleep faster and experience restorative deep sleep.

## The Benefits of a Good Night's Sleep

Did you know that quality sleep can lower stress hormones and improve your mood? Without enough sleep, you may feel easily frustrated and irritable. Stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol increase with a lack of sleep. This can affect your overall hunger, blood sugar, and lead to overeating. When you prioritize your sleep each night, these hormones become more balanced, giving you a renewed sense of energy and positivity.

*"I'm conscious of the way I live and do things every day that nourish my body. I eat well, I work out, I try to manage stress, I get a good sleep in, and together, that does wonders."*

*~Ella Woodward*




# How to Create a Sleep Routine and Environment

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Sleep Duration  
Changes Your  
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Pay attention to your sleep location (the bedroom), your daily activities before sleep (your sleep routine), and your sleep hours. For a better night's sleep, try:

- Dimming lamps
- An essential oil diffuser
- A white noise app or machine
- Gentle stretching before bed
- A warm bath with soothing scents
- A cup of chamomile or sleepytime tea



## Releasing the Stress of the Day

Throughout the day your stress levels rise. You may find it beneficial to release tension, frustrations, and emotions with an end-of-day routine or ritual. Preparing for good sleep requires a focus on slowing down. Right before you lay down for sleep actively center yourself, notice body sensations, and clear any lingering thoughts from the day. Stay present in the moment and avoid distractions, such as thinking ahead to tomorrow. Be intentional, mindful, and present as you begin to relax, then let go so you can experience deep sleep.

### **Optional Activity:**

Make tomorrow's to do list a few hours before you go to bed tonight. List your tasks for the next day on a piece of paper or in a sleep journal. Doing so will put your mind at ease because you can then set aside your list and clear your mind knowing the tasks will be there for you to tackle tomorrow. Research shows setting aside tomorrow's needs and concerns will help you fall asleep faster.

# Relax and Release Sleep Preparation

## Body Movements to Help You Wind Down from the Day

Here are a few exercises you can do to prepare your body to rest all night long. Begin with a nice long inhale and exhale out the mouth; let it be audible.



### Head from Ear to Ear

Sitting in a chair or in a bed, gently move your head from ear to ear two to three times in each direction.



### Butterfly Pose

Place the soles of your feet together and gently massage or rub the bottom of each foot. If you like essential oils, apply some lavender to the bottom of each foot.



### Legs Up the Wall

Relax with your legs over the couch or up against a wall.



Lying with the soles of your feet together, inhale saying the word "love" and exhale saying the word "gratitude."



Sitting with your knees bent and resting together, and your arms supporting behind your body, gently move your knees side to side like a windshield wiper. Alternatively, move your knees side to side while lying down.



Final relaxation for the day. Place your hands on your stomach, or by your side, and completely relax your body. Let it melt into the bed and think of four to five things you are grateful for from the day.



## Additional Wind Down Exercises



Lying down, bend your knees and rest your hands on the back of your legs or bottoms of your feet.



Resting on your back, place one ankle atop the opposite knee. Circle the ankle, then rock your hips from side to side.



With your knees bent, while leaving some space between them, let your legs fall to left. Lift your left foot and rest it on the outside of your right leg. Breathe for two to three deep breaths. Repeat on the opposite side.



Softening the body, move your feet apart and let your knees fall together. Inhale love, exhale gratitude, and “feel” grateful for the things you can do. Before falling asleep, think of three to four things for which you are grateful (family, food, friends, water, trees, your car, etc).

# Falling Asleep Faster

Here are some things that may help you fall asleep more smoothly. You may want to try one in your bedtime routine. (See the resource section at the end of the packet for online resources.)

- **Guided meditation for sleep:**  
Releasing your mind’s thoughts, lists, and concerns frees the brain and allows the body to relax. Try a 20 minute guided meditation to help you fall asleep and stay asleep.
- **Music to soothe and relax:**  
Listen to calming music to help you sleep.
- **Mindful breathing bedtime routine:**  
Add a breathing activity to your bedtime routine. Release the tension and stress of the day. Focus attention on your breathing and how it slows, relaxes, and soothes you.
- **Try Breath Ball App:**  
Follow the visual of a pulsing ball to slow and regulate breathing to promote stress relief, induce sleepiness, and lower anxiety.
- **Listen to relaxing sounds on YouTube.**



# Personal Growth Challenge

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Better  
Sleep  
Bingo



Play Better Sleep Bingo this month and practice strategies for better sleep. What will you incorporate into your bedtime routine? How will you change your sleep environment? Mark off each activity after you complete it. A BINGO is made when you have completed all boxes diagonally, across a row, or vertically in a column.

**Once you have a BINGO, submit it to your Wellness Coordinator for a chance to win a prize.**



*b i n g o*

Decrease your screen time two hours before bed.	Reduce lights and noises after 6 or 7 pm.	Increase sleep hours by going to bed 30 minutes earlier.	Remove paperwork from your bedroom.	Put lavender essential oil on your pillowcase.
Wear earplugs and/or a sleep mask.	Take a warm bath before going to bed.	Relax using guided sleep meditation.	Write in a journal.	Do the mindful breathing exercises.
Practice gentle stretching before bed.	Meditate for 15 minutes just before you go to sleep.	FREE SPACE	Dim the lights in your room an hour before bedtime.	Watch a Youtube video that helps you relax.
Declutter your bedroom at night before you go to sleep.	Write down tomorrow's to-do list before bed.	Try three daily wind down exercises.	Keep a gratitude list of things for which you feel grateful.	Think of a peaceful and relaxing place, either real or imagined.
Play relaxing music to fall asleep.	Give yourself a foot massage.	Finish eating and snacking two hours before bed.	Take a walk to release tension from your day.	Drink a cup of relaxing chamomile or sleepytime tea.





# Coworker Connection

Group  
Visualization  
Board

Join your coworkers to create a visualization board that will encourage you to relax, sleep, and renew! Place your team's visualization board in a breakroom or shared space in the clinic. Use a whiteboard or pinboard to pin, glue, or tape pictures from magazines, real photographs, or images printed from the Internet that remind you to relax, sleep, and renew. Ideas include vacation locations, scenes from nature, clouds, water, peaceful places, comforting words and items, sunrises/sunsets, stars, arms stretched out, boats, birds, or anything else you can imagine. Have fun and be creative!

## Wrap-Up

You've challenged yourself to practice mind and body relaxation before sleep and to create an environment that encourages restful sleep. Hopefully, you discovered new techniques to help you sleep well and experience the restorative benefits of sleep. Please revisit this packet anytime you need tips and inspiration for better sleep.

*"We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep."*

*~William Shakespeare*

# Congratulations!

Over the last month, you've taken steps toward a healthier, more rested you. Keep it up, and be on the lookout for the next WIC Wellness Works challenge!

## RESOURCES

### Sleep and Sleep Hygiene Resources

**American Sleep Association What is Sleep? Why is it Needed?**

<https://www.sleepassociation.org/about-sleep/what-is-sleep/>

### American Sleep Association Sleep Hygiene Tips

<https://www.sleepassociation.org/about-sleep/sleep-hygiene-tips/>

### Guided Meditation for Sleep

**Meditation Station by Stin Hansen**

<https://www.owltail.com/podcasts/2441-meditation-station-by-stin-hansen>

### Mindful Breathing Bedtime Routine

**Greater Good in Action Mindful Breathing**

[https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/mindful\\_breathing](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/mindful_breathing)

### App for Sleepiness

**Breath Ball**

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/breath-ball/id1332571778?mt=12>

### Relaxing Sounds on YouTube

**Ocean Sounds for Sleep**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P\\_SeZhpqbvE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_SeZhpqbvE)

### Relaxing White Noise

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbunYN0o9Yaid7zHaor\\_UHA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbunYN0o9Yaid7zHaor_UHA)

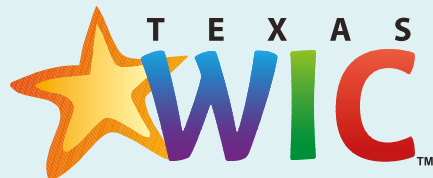
# Notes







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Services



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