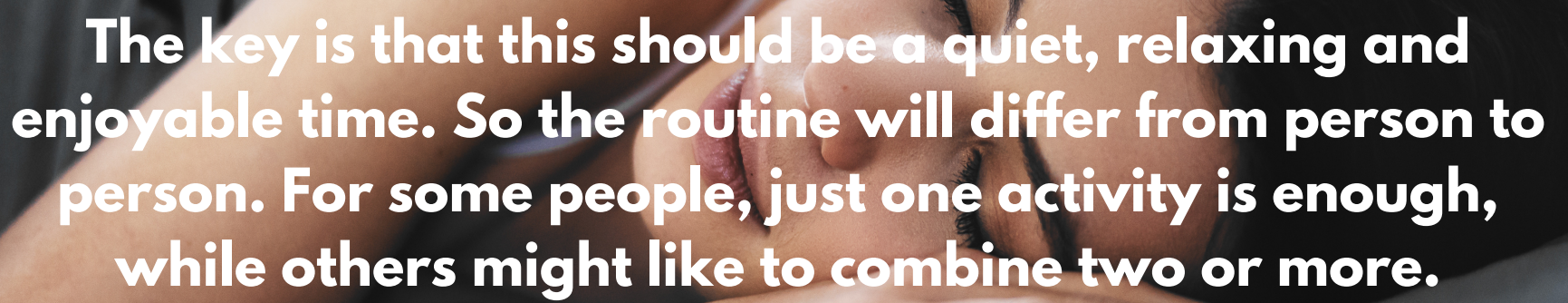




8

CALMING
BEDTIME
ACTIVITIES FOR
BETTER SLEEP



The key is that this should be a quiet, relaxing and enjoyable time. So the routine will differ from person to person. For some people, just one activity is enough, while others might like to combine two or more.

1

Switch off your electronic devices.

- They stimulate your brain.
- The light that some devices emit might affect your internal body clock. If you can't separate yourself from your phone, at least put the blue light filter on and dim the screen brightness.
- They can be addictive, eating into even more sleep time.
- Checking emails, the news and even social media at night can create worry and stress.

2

Do a simple relaxation exercise or meditation before bed.

Even in ten minutes, I can squeeze in the following to my meditation:

- Sit cross-legged on the floor or lie comfortably.
- Breathe deeply 5 times: in through the nose, out through the mouth.
- Think of three things you're grateful for today (this is a great technique to improve your mood).
- Tell yourself that the day is over now. Forgive yourself for any mistakes, bad thoughts or 'failings'. Forgive others too. Then tell yourself that it's all in the past.
- Breathe deeply a few more times, mentally following your breath out of your mouth, into the room and beyond (this helps get yourself out of your busy head).

3

Bring your temperature down.

- Set your bedroom thermostat to be inside the above temperature range.
- Open windows to clear out any hot, stuffy air.
- Have a shower 15 to 30 minutes before bed, preferably a cool shower.
- If you have a hot bath, make sure it's at least an hour before bed. It takes a long time for the body to cool down after a bath.
- Go for a short walk outside to get some fresh air.
- If you live somewhere hot, try a cooling mattress pad or bed fan.
- The naturally lower nighttime temperature is one of the signals the body uses to start melatonin production. And melatonin tells your body when it's time to sleep or wake up.

4

Spiritual practice: yoga, meditation

If you find that engaging in spiritual activity brings you peace and clarity of mind, then doing it before getting into bed is an ideal time.

Whether you enjoy reading spiritual literature, praying, doing light yoga or meditating, it can be incorporated into your bedtime routine.

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5

Write down worries and reminders for the next day

- Sometimes thoughts like these can buzz around in your head, joined by other worries and reminders from your mental to-do list.
- A simple and effective trick is to write down your worries and points you need to remember for tomorrow before going to bed.

6

Have a relaxing drink or light snack

It's a good idea to avoid caffeine, alcohol and sugary drinks before bed. But drinking a herbal tea or other decaffeinated drink is a good way to spend some quiet time, perhaps whilst reading or listening to music.

If you feel hungry at night, it's okay to have a light snack before bed. Just try to keep it healthy and light - a banana, yogurt, cottage cheese on toast, some nuts or berries are good examples.

7

Spend time with family, friends, your partner or pet

If you live with others, why not spend some time before bed talking or playing a quiet game? If you can, try to resist the temptation to all be using a phone or electronic device in the same room without talking to one another.

If you have a pet, why not have some playtime or cuddles, or get some fresh air together? I'm sure they'll appreciate it (unless your pet is a fish...)

And if you sleep with a partner, there are, of course, other ways you might want to spend your time together before going to sleep.

8

Listen to music

While it's good to reduce screen time, listening to music before bed is a great idea. Preferably not music which is too exciting or emotional though.

Everyone loves music, but how often do you take time to do literally nothing but listen to it? Create a playlist of calming music to help prepare you for sleep.



Another mindfulness practice that can help you sleep better is BrainTap. BrainTap uses a mixture of light and sound frequencies that combine to enhance your mindfulness experience and invite a higher degree of alpha/theta brainwave activity.