

THE IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP PROGRAM

COACHING PROGRAM



Toogood Nutrition

THE IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP PROGRAM

Understanding the power of sleep and how to get as much high-quality sleep as possible is one of the healthiest things you can do. This 2-week habit coaching program will help you plan a sleep routine and guide you towards all the benefits of sleeping better.



DAY 0 - INTRODUCTION OF HABIT (SUNDAY)

Habit Challenge: Improve your sleep routine.

Understanding the power of sleep and how to get as much high quality sleep as possible is one of the healthiest things you can do.

We can all relate to how loss of sleep can take its toll on our energy, mood, decision-making and ability to handle stress.

Sleep should therefore be your top priority.

Many people try to sleep as little as possible, but just as exercise and nutrition are important to look and feel your best, so is sleep.

No other activity delivers so many benefits with so little effort. Sleep has a direct correlation to the quality of your waking life.

How can I personalise this habit?

Take a look at your current sleep routine, especially how many hours of sleep you get on average per night. Do you sleep 5 or 6 hours per night? Or 7-8 hours? What about on weekends? At what time do you get to bed each night? How would rate the quality of your sleep? Choose one key area to focus on and make a daily habit to improve it.

How can I make this habit easy?

The first step is to scale the habit to something you are 90-100% confident you can do for 6 days of the week. You might want to aim for a specific time to get into bed for e.g. 10pm, or you might want to aim for a certain length of sleep each night e.g. 8 hours.

Have one day off per week from completing the habit.

What can I piggyback off of?

Look for an event you can use as a reminder to improve your sleep routine: after putting the kids to bed, after brushing your teeth, after watching your

daily TV series, when an alarm goes off on your phone, whatever you want. Just pick a pre-existing habit to use as your reminder.

TO DO: Create your personal version of the habit to commit to this challenge!

Here's a template:

I am 90-100% confident that I will [insert habit] for 6 days a week after I [insert what you're going to piggyback off of].

Here's an example:

I am 90-100% confident that I will sleep 8 hours per night for 6 days a week after I have put the kids to bed.

P.S. Don't worry about making this perfect. you can adjust it.

DAY 1 – START OF HABIT REVIEW (MONDAY)

How was Day 1? Did you complete a personalised version of the habit?

Today, after completing your habit for the first time, I want you to answer these two questions:

1. *What did I do well today?*
2. *What did I learn today?*

These questions are so important that I want you to reflect on them every day.

The truth is, the most overlooked factor in building new habits is bridging the gap between what you want to do and the behaviour that you're trying to make automatic.

You've got to close the loop between your intention and your behaviour, and it's as simple as answering these two questions.

So here they are for you again:

1. *What did I do well today?*
2. *What did I learn today?*

DAY 2 – DAILY LESSON TO REINFORCE HABIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (TUESDAY)

The study of sleep looks at the neuroscientific and physiological basis sleep and its functions.

It is assumed that the benefits we get from enough sleep have evolved over time, creating greater dependence on getting sufficient and quality sleep.

Sleep is a naturally occurring state characterised by reduced or absent consciousness, and the inactivity of nearly all voluntary muscles.

In humans, sleep timing is controlled by the circadian clock and (to some extent) by willed behaviour. The circadian clock (also known as circadian oscillator) allows us to coordinate our biology and behaviour with daily and seasonal changes in the day/night cycle. This in-built biological clock receives daily corrective signals from the environment, primarily daylight and darkness.

Circadian clocks are the central mechanisms which drive circadian rhythms. The term circadian comes from the Latin 'circa', meaning 'around or approximately', and diem meaning 'day'. It works over a 24 hour period.

This clock is reset through our ability to sense external cues. The primary one of these environmental changes is light. This clock is considered to be intertwined with most cellular processes.

When you sleep, the body doesn't just shut down and switch off. In fact, while you rest, the brain oversees a wide variety of biological maintenance that improves your health markers and aids recovery.

Sleep tight!

DAY 3 – DAILY LESSON TO REINFORCE HABIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (WEDNESDAY)

Here's a number of sleep promoting techniques and considerations that can be easily integrated into your evening routine.

Get a routine

Syncing with the body's natural clock, the circadian rhythm is one of the most effective methods we have for getting a good night's sleep. Getting into a strict and consistent routine of going to bed and getting up in the morning can have huge benefits. It's also important to experiment with different sleep and wake times, as various set ups will benefit people differently. Aim to not only find the ideal length of sleep, but also the times your sleep should start and finish.

Control the surroundings

On top of finding the best sleeping routine, we can naturally encourage the body to feel more alert or relaxed. A hormone known as melatonin is released when we are in dark surroundings, as it helps the body regulate the sleep-wake cycle. If we are exposed to little to no sunlight during the day, we release melatonin, making us sleepy during the day.

In a bright environment, melatonin production is stopped. The same occurs at night. If we are exposed to bright light or electrical equipment just before bed, it can slow down the release – just when we do want a release of melatonin in order to induce sleep.

The goal should be to spend more time in daylight during the day, with less exposure to light (including artificial light) at night.

Keep the bedroom for sleep

It's essential to ensure the bedroom is optimised for relaxing, unwinding and sleep. The bedroom should therefore become a place associated for sleep which will send a powerful signal to help us nod off.

Other important factors here are:

- Eliminating/reducing any noises that may disturb your sleep
- Keeping the bedroom at the right temperature
- Removing any electronic equipment
- Ensuring the room is dark enough
- Ensuring the bed is comfortable enough

Improve nutrition and exercise habits

- Good nutrition habits – particularly in the last hours before bed – can drastically improve sleep quality. Some important considerations are:
- Avoid eating large meals before bed
- Avoid drinking too much liquid
- Avoid caffeine in the latter part of the day (2–4pm is good cut off)
- Avoid alcohol before bed

A small bedtime snack containing a balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates can be ideal to help you fall asleep, as that feeling of being satisfied can help the body rest.

Daily exercise can also lead to improved sleep, while exercising too late may disturb the body's natural wake-sleep cycle as it can act as a heavy stimulus on the body.

Reduce stress and relax

Stress related to family, money, work or other day-to-day difficulties can be a common sleep disruptor. Managing these stressors, keeping a journal and brain dumping before bed can be beneficial.

relaxation techniques can be effective in aiding a better night's sleep. Some common techniques are:

- Write down any problems or issues
- Conduct some deep breathing techniques
- Use progressive muscle relaxation techniques
- Avoid any stressing tasks or thoughts before bed
- Keep the bedroom clean and tidy
- Have a hot shower or bath
- Do something you enjoy before bed

Start applying some of these techniques and you'll be sleeping like a baby very soon. Sweet Dreams!

DAY 4 – WEEKEND WIN (THURSDAY)

It can be difficult to stay consistent with a habit if you have a lot going on in your life, or if you take a break from your normal routine.

The perfect example of this is the weekend. So let's set you up to win this weekend.

How? By doing an easy version of your sleep habit for the weekend.

Today, I want you to plan how you'll stay on track with improving your sleep routine habit this weekend.

Perhaps you need to adjust your normal sleep schedule? Perhaps you need to reduce how many hours of sleep each night you will actually get?

DAY 5 – DAILY LESSON TO REINFORCE HABIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (FRIDAY)

Here's some quick facts on how quality sleep helps you be more awesome:

Restoration

Sleep is restorative, and without it you are not able to work, learn, create or communicate at your highest level. Over time, lack of sleep can even lead to mental and physical breakdown. Sleep has been linked to the immune system. Sleep loss can impair our immune function, so by sleeping longer we can invest in strengthening our immune system.

When we sleep, our metabolic rates reduce and free radical production is decreased, allowing restorative processes to take over. The metabolic phase during sleep is anabolic, as we see a greater release of anabolic hormones.

Memory Processing

Numerous studies have been conducted into the correlation between sleep and memory. Sleep deprivation is linked to a reduction of 'working memory', which keeps information active for further processing and supports higher-level cognition functions such as decision-making, reasoning and memory.

So, the next time you forget to buy your protein powder, you know why!

Preservation

It's been suggested that sleep can serve as a 'preservation and protection' system to reserve energy and to keep us out of harms way.

DAY 6 – NO DAILY LESSON (SATURDAY)

DAY 7 – WEEKLY GROUP REVIEW (SUNDAY)

When you complete the habit today, take a minute to reflect on the past week or so of doing the habit.

- *What has it actually been like, as opposed to the fantasy you had about it before you started?*
- *What have you learned?*
- *What do you appreciate?*
- *What obstacles have come up, and are there ways to overcome them for next week?*

Consider writing a short journal entry about these reflections, to solidify your learning. Treat habit formation as a learning process, as a way to learn about yourself, your mind, mindfulness, resistance and more.

DAY 8 – ADJUSTMENT OF HABIT (MONDAY)

If all went well last week, and you didn't struggle or skip the habit for more than a day, I recommend that you lengthen the habit this week. If you've struggled, keep it the same as last week or make it even easier.

For example, if you've just been aiming to get into bed 20 minutes earlier than previously, you could try 30 minutes this week.

Or if you've been aiming for 7 hours of sleep per night, you could try 7 hours and 15 minutes this week.

Never make too big an adjustment so that it becomes too difficult.

This slow change process of expanding the habit a little at a time helps overcome the resistance of the mind to change and discomfort.

Each step isn't difficult, so your mind doesn't rebel much. Gradually the habit becomes your new normal and you can expand a bit more, pushing your comfort zone a little at a time.

DAY 9 - DAILY LESSON TO REINFORCE HABIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (TUESDAY)

A number of stages of sleep occur every time we get some rest. These stages represent what's happening beneath the surface, and all play an important part in the benefits of rest.

There are two main types of sleep:

Non-REM (NREM) Sleep

This is essentially a 3-stage sleep cycle, with each being a deeper level than the previous one.

Stage N1 (Transition to sleep)-

The stage between sleep and wakefulness. The muscles are active, the eyes roll slowly under the eyelids, muscle activity slows down and we are easily awakened.

Stage N2 (Light sleep)

Considered the first stage of true sleep, characterised by an increase in 'theta' activity within the brain. We become harder to awaken, eye movement stops, heart rate slows and body temperature decreases.

Stage N3 (Deep sleep)

Known as 'slow-wave sleep', characterised by an increase in 'delta' activity within the brain. Blood flow to the brain is decreased and passed to the body to enhance its restorative benefits. We are difficult to awaken at this stage.

REM (Rapid Eye Movement) Sleep

REM sleep has been given this name as our eyes can be seen moving back and forth in this stage. It can also be known as 'dream sleep' and usually

occurs about 60–90 minutes after falling asleep. Eye movement, heart rate and blood pressure increase, yet arm and leg muscles are paralysed. Every time we sleep we are likely to go through all stages of this cycle. Our bodies move back and forth between REM and N3 sleep to form a complete sleep cycle. Each cycle typically lasts about 90 minutes and repeats four to six times over the course of the night.

Typically, the majority of deep sleep occurs in the first half of the night, with REM stages becoming longer with more light N2 sleep later into the night. This is why many people report waking up after a number of hours' sleep, as their sleep is getting lighter. Each sleep within this sleep cycle has potential benefits to you. A normal adult spends around 50% of total sleep time in stage 2 sleep, 20% in REM sleep and 30% in stage 1 and 3 sleep.

Stage N3, deep sleep,

Is considered one of the most important for making us feel energised and refreshed from rest. It is heavily involved in maintaining your health, providing growth and development, repairing muscles and tissues, and boosting the immune system. It essentially renews the body.

REM sleep renews the mind, and is important for a healthy memory and learning ability. During REM sleep, the brain consolidates and processes the information we have learnt that day, while forming neural connections to strengthen the memory. It also replenishes its supply of neurotransmitters including feel-good chemicals like serotonin and dopamine.

It's evident that we need a mixture of all sleep stages for optimal health and restoration.

DAY 10 - DAILY LESSON TO REINFORCE HABIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (WEDNESDAY)

How much sleep do you really need?

With modern lifestyles people are sleeping less than ever, with the average person getting fewer than seven hours per night.

Whilst sleep requirements vary from person to person, this average is not enough for most, and is leading some people into chronic sleep disorder.

Most people sleep as much as they need, but not as much as they should for optimal health and performance. In reality, most healthy adults need between 7.5-9 hours of sleep per night for best results. Young adults and children require even more.

There is no system to show exactly how many hours you should, and the best way is to evaluate it is how you feel throughout the day. If energy is low, memory is poor and you don't feel alert, chances are you need more sleep.

A common sign that you require more sleep is that you always want to sleep in if you don't set your alarm clock. This is your body telling you that it requires more sleep. You are essentially playing catch up. If you wake in the morning and feel like you could sleep a lot more, then you likely do.

DAY 11 – WEEKEND WIN (THURSDAY)

Missing a day of doing the habit isn't a big deal, but if you miss a second day, it can sometimes trigger a downward spiral.

You might feel bad about missing two days, making it likely you'll miss a third day, and feel so bad that you just avoid thinking about the habit.

To avoid this downward spiral, you might create a new rule for yourself: never miss two days in a row.

So let's set you up to win this weekend and achieve your habit.

Today, think about your super easy, almost effortless version of the habit for the weekend.

How and when will you do the habit this weekend?

DAY 12 – DAILY LESSON TO REINFORCE HABIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (FRIDAY)

We're almost at the end of the 'improve your sleep routine' habit challenge.

For the next few days, pay attention to your motivation levels – is it as high now as when you first started?

If it is dipping, this is probably because the reality of doing the habit for this long isn't something you're used to.

This is a great opportunity to turn from your expectations for this habit, to learning what other things can motivate you. Other motivations you could explore: the joy of doing, the pride of accomplishment, the feeling of satisfaction when sticking to something, tackling difficulties, the love of learning.

These are all great motivations to explore for any pursuit. Stay focused this weekend and remember to have some fun in the process!

DAY 13 – NO DAILY LESSON (SATURDAY)

DAY 14 – END OF HABIT REVIEW (SUNDAY)

Over the last two weeks you've completed the 'improve your sleep routine' habit challenge – nice work!

Today, take a minute to reflect again on the past week of doing the habit.

- *What has the habit been like and how have you done?*
- *What have you learned?*
- *What parts or how much of this habit will you continue to do?*

Consider writing a short journal entry about these reflections, to solidify your learning. Treat habit formation as a learning process, as a way to learn about yourself, your mind, mindfulness, resistance and more.