



understanding **Sleeping Naturally**

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Most of us experience a sleepless night occasionally. A night or two of lost sleep, though not ideal, shouldn't have any major effect on your health. When one sleepless night turns into several in a row, you may be facing a sleep problem and several nights of missed sleep can affect your emotional and physical well-being. If you have difficulties falling asleep or staying asleep, there are many natural ways to alleviate this problem without prescription medication:

Tryptophan Foods

In the evening, try to eat bananas, dates, figs, warm milk, nut butter, turkey, whole grain crackers or yogurt, because these are foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, which can promote sleep.

Avoid caffeine from lunchtime on and have your last meal 2-3 hours before bedtime. If your body has to work hard to digest your food when it should be sleeping, you may have a difficult time staying asleep.

Consistent Lifestyle

Get ready for bed and get into bed at the same time each night; consistency is the key to success. Finding a

routine that works for you and following it will help you reach your sleep goals.

Take a hot bath or shower 1-2 hours before bedtime to help your body and mind relax. Add some lavender oil to your bath or into your shower gel to relieve tension and relax tight muscles.

Dim the lights 1 hour before going to bed to tell your pineal gland it's time to start producing the sleep hormone, melatonin. Your body only produces melatonin when it's dark.

Create a sleep atmosphere in your bedroom. Take out all distractions like a computer, television or phone. Make your room as dark as possible to signal your body's natural day/night rhythms.

Herbal Helpers

Chamomile tea sipped a ½ hour before bedtime can relieve anxiety and promote a restful sleep. And Valerian Root (tea or pills) is considered one of nature's tranquilizers. It calms the nerves without the side effects of comparable orthodox drugs. In order to achieve the full effects, Valerian needs to be taken consistently over a period of 3 weeks.

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