

Sleep Smarter: 21 Essential Strategies to Sleep Your Way to a Better Body, Better Health, and Bigger Success

by Shawn Stevenson

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Summary:

Sleep Smarter: 21 Essential Strategies to Sleep Your Way to a Better Body, Better Health, and Bigger Success by Shawn Stevenson is an informative book that provides readers with the knowledge they need to get better sleep. The author explains why getting enough quality sleep is essential for overall health and success in life. He also outlines 21 strategies that can help people improve their sleeping habits and achieve better rest.

The book begins by discussing the importance of good sleep hygiene and how it affects physical health, mental clarity, emotional well-being, productivity levels, creativity, relationships with others, and more. It then goes on to explain how poor sleeping habits can lead to serious medical conditions such as obesity or diabetes. Stevenson also talks about the effects of stress on our bodies and minds when we don't get enough restful sleep.

Next he dives into his 21 strategies for improving one's sleeping habits which include things like setting up a consistent bedtime routine; avoiding caffeine late in the day; limiting exposure to blue light from electronic devices before bed; exercising regularly but not too close to bedtime; eating healthy foods throughout the day; creating a comfortable bedroom environment free from distractions; using relaxation techniques such as meditation or yoga before going to bed; taking natural supplements if needed (such as melatonin); tracking your progress over time so you can see what works best for you.

Finally he wraps up with some additional tips on how you can make sure you are getting enough quality sleep each night including making sure your bedroom is dark at night (by using blackout curtains), keeping noise levels low (using earplugs if necessary), avoiding alcohol before bedtime (as it disrupts deep REM cycles), and ensuring that your mattress is comfortable.

Overall this book provides readers with valuable information about why good sleep hygiene matters along with practical advice on how they can improve their own sleeping habits so they can enjoy all of its benefits. Whether someone has difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep through the night this book offers helpful solutions that will enable them to finally get a good night's rest.</p></div>

Main ideas:

#1. *Get Sunlight: Sunlight helps to regulate your circadian rhythm and can help you to sleep better.*

Getting enough sunlight is essential for good sleep. Sunlight helps to regulate your circadian rhythm, which is the body's internal clock that tells you when it's time to wake up and go to bed. When your circadian rhythm is off balance, it can lead to difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep throughout the night. By getting regular exposure to sunlight during the day, you can help keep your circadian rhythm in check and ensure that you get a better night's rest.

Sunlight also helps boost serotonin levels in the brain, which plays an important role in regulating mood and energy levels. Low serotonin levels are associated with depression and fatigue, so getting some sun each day can help improve both of these symptoms as well as helping you sleep better at night.

Finally, sunlight provides vitamin D which has been linked with improved overall health including stronger bones and a healthier immune system. Vitamin D deficiency has been linked with insomnia so making sure that you get enough

sunshine each day will help ensure that your body gets all of its necessary nutrients for optimal health.

#2. Exercise Regularly: Regular exercise can help to reduce stress and improve your sleep quality.

Exercising regularly is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Not only does it help to reduce stress and improve sleep quality, but it can also have positive effects on your overall health. Regular exercise helps to strengthen the heart and lungs, build muscle strength, increase flexibility, and improve balance. It can also help to boost energy levels throughout the day and promote better mental clarity.

In addition to physical benefits, regular exercise has been shown to have psychological benefits as well. Exercise releases endorphins which are hormones that act as natural painkillers in the body. These endorphins can help reduce feelings of depression or anxiety while improving moods overall. Exercise has also been linked with improved self-esteem and confidence.

Regular exercise doesn't need to be overly strenuous or time consuming; even just 30 minutes of moderate activity each day can make a big difference in how you feel both physically and mentally. So if you're looking for ways to reduce stress levels or get better sleep at night, consider adding some form of regular exercise into your daily routine.

#3. Avoid Caffeine: Caffeine can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided in the afternoon and evening.

Avoiding caffeine in the afternoon and evening is an important part of getting a good night's sleep. Caffeine is a stimulant that can interfere with your body's natural sleep cycle, making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. It can also cause restlessness and make it difficult to relax before bedtime. To ensure you get the best possible sleep, try to avoid caffeinated beverages like coffee, tea, energy drinks, and soda after lunchtime.

If you do need an extra boost of energy during the day, opt for healthier alternatives such as green tea or yerba mate which contain lower levels of caffeine than regular coffee or black tea. You should also be mindful of hidden sources of caffeine such as chocolate bars or certain medications which may contain small amounts.

By avoiding caffeine in the afternoon and evening hours you will give yourself a better chance at getting quality restful sleep each night. This will help improve your overall health by reducing stress levels and improving concentration throughout the day.

#4. Avoid Alcohol: Alcohol can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided in the evening.

Avoiding alcohol in the evening is an important part of getting a good night's sleep. Alcohol can interfere with your body's natural sleep cycle, making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night. It also reduces the quality of your sleep, leaving you feeling tired and groggy in the morning. Additionally, drinking too much alcohol can lead to dehydration which can further disrupt your sleep.

If you do choose to drink alcohol, try limiting yourself to one or two drinks several hours before bedtime so that its effects have worn off by the time you go to bed. Avoiding caffeine after lunchtime is also recommended as this stimulant can make it difficult for some people to fall asleep at night.

#5. Create a Sleep Routine: Creating a consistent sleep routine can help to improve your sleep quality.

Creating a consistent sleep routine is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your sleep quality. A good sleep routine should include winding down before bed, setting a regular bedtime and wake time, avoiding screens and other distractions in the bedroom, and creating an environment that is conducive to restful sleep.

Winding down before bed means taking some time for yourself to relax and prepare for sleep. This could involve reading

a book or magazine, listening to calming music or nature sounds, doing gentle stretching exercises or yoga poses, writing in a journal about your day's events, meditating or practicing deep breathing techniques. Whatever activity you choose should be something that helps you feel relaxed.

Setting a regular bedtime and wake time will help regulate your body's internal clock so it knows when it's time to go to sleep and when it's time to wake up. Try going to bed at the same time each night (even on weekends) and waking up at the same time each morning.

Avoiding screens such as TVs, computers, tablets and smartphones in the bedroom can also help improve your quality of sleep by reducing exposure to blue light which can disrupt melatonin production – an essential hormone involved in regulating our circadian rhythm (sleep-wake cycle).

Finally creating an environment that is conducive for restful sleep includes making sure your room is dark enough with blackout curtains if necessary; keeping noise levels low; ensuring temperatures are comfortable; using breathable sheets/blankets/pillows; diffusing essential oils like lavender which have been shown scientifically proven benefits for relaxation.

#6. *Reduce Stress: Stress can interfere with your sleep and should be managed through relaxation techniques and lifestyle changes.*

Reducing stress is an important part of getting a good nights sleep. Stress can interfere with your body's natural ability to relax and fall asleep, leading to insomnia or other sleep disturbances. To reduce stress, it is important to practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and mindfulness meditation. Additionally, lifestyle changes such as exercising regularly and eating healthy foods can help reduce stress levels.

It is also helpful to create a calming bedtime routine that helps you wind down before going to bed. This could include taking a warm bath or shower; reading a book; listening to soothing music; writing in a journal; stretching or doing yoga poses; drinking herbal tea; or engaging in any activity that helps you relax and unwind from the day.

Finally, try not to use electronic devices like phones or computers for at least one hour before bedtime since the blue light emitted by these devices can disrupt your circadian rhythm and make it harder for you to fall asleep.

#7. *Avoid Electronics Before Bed: Electronics can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided in the evening.*

Avoiding electronics before bed is an important part of getting a good nights sleep. Electronics, such as phones, tablets, and computers emit blue light which can interfere with your body's natural circadian rhythm. This disruption to your internal clock can make it harder for you to fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night. Additionally, the stimulation from these devices can keep your mind active when it should be winding down in preparation for sleep.

To get the best quality rest possible, try avoiding electronics at least one hour before bedtime. Instead of scrolling through social media or watching TV late into the evening, opt for activities that are more calming like reading a book or taking a warm bath. You could also practice some gentle stretching or yoga poses to help relax both your body and mind.

#8. *Eat Healthy Foods: Eating healthy foods can help to improve your sleep quality.*

Eating healthy foods is an important part of getting a good nights sleep. Eating nutrient-rich, whole foods can help to provide your body with the energy it needs to stay alert during the day and restful at night. Healthy eating also helps to regulate hormones that are involved in regulating your sleep cycle, such as melatonin and serotonin. Additionally, eating healthy can help you maintain a healthy weight which is important for overall health and well-being.

When choosing what to eat for dinner or snacks throughout the day, focus on including plenty of fruits and vegetables as well as lean proteins like fish or chicken. Avoid processed foods high in sugar or saturated fats which can cause spikes in blood sugar levels leading to difficulty sleeping later on.

In addition to eating nutritious meals throughout the day, try not to eat too close before bedtime so that your body has time to digest properly before lying down. This will ensure that you don't wake up feeling bloated or uncomfortable during the night.

#9. *Avoid Late Night Snacking: Eating late at night can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided.*

Late night snacking can be a difficult habit to break, but it is important for your overall health and wellbeing. Eating late at night can interfere with your sleep by causing indigestion or acid reflux, which can make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. Additionally, eating late at night may cause you to gain weight due to the extra calories consumed that are not burned off before bedtime. To avoid these issues, try to eat dinner earlier in the evening and limit snacks after 8pm.

If you find yourself craving something late at night, opt for healthier options such as fruits or vegetables instead of processed foods like chips or cookies. You could also drink herbal tea or warm milk as an alternative snack option that will help relax your body and prepare it for sleep. Finally, if you're still feeling hungry after 8pm then have a light snack such as yogurt with fruit or some nuts.

By avoiding late-night snacking you will be able to get better quality sleep which will lead to improved energy levels during the day and better overall health in the long run. So next time you feel tempted by those midnight cravings remember why it's best for your body if you resist!

#10. *Take Supplements: Certain supplements can help to improve your sleep quality.*

Taking supplements can be a great way to improve your sleep quality. Supplements such as melatonin, magnesium, and valerian root can help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. Melatonin is a hormone that helps regulate the body's natural sleep-wake cycle. Magnesium helps relax muscles and reduce stress levels which can make it easier to drift off into dreamland. Valerian root has been used for centuries as an herbal remedy for insomnia due to its calming effects on the nervous system.

In addition to these three supplements, there are many other options available that may help with improving your sleep quality. It's important to talk with your doctor before taking any supplement or medication in order to ensure safety and effectiveness.

#11. *Use Essential Oils: Essential oils can help to reduce stress and improve your sleep quality.*

Essential oils are a great way to reduce stress and improve your sleep quality. They can be used in a variety of ways, such as diffusing them into the air or applying them directly to the skin. Essential oils have been used for centuries to promote relaxation and help people get better rest. Lavender oil is one of the most popular essential oils for sleep because it has calming properties that can help you relax and drift off into a peaceful slumber.

In addition to lavender, other essential oils like chamomile, ylang-ylang, bergamot, sandalwood, frankincense, cedarwood and vetiver are also known for their calming effects on the body and mind. You can use these essential oils in an aromatherapy diffuser or add a few drops to your bathwater before bedtime. If you prefer not to diffuse or bathe with essential oils then you can apply them topically by diluting them with a carrier oil such as coconut oil.

Using essential oils is an easy way to create an atmosphere conducive for restful sleep without having to take any medications or supplements. The aroma from these natural plant extracts will fill your bedroom with soothing scents that will help lull you into deep relaxation so that you wake up feeling refreshed each morning.

#12. Use White Noise: White noise can help to reduce distractions and improve your sleep quality.

White noise is a type of sound that can be used to reduce distractions and improve sleep quality. It works by masking other sounds in the environment, such as traffic or conversations, which can interfere with your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. White noise also helps to create a more consistent soundscape throughout the night, allowing you to drift off into deeper stages of sleep without interruption.

Using white noise while sleeping has been shown to help people fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. It can also help those who suffer from tinnitus or ringing in the ears by providing a soothing background sound that masks any intrusive noises. Additionally, it may even provide some relief for those suffering from insomnia.

If you're looking for an easy way to improve your sleep quality, consider using white noise at bedtime. You can find many different types of white noise machines online or in stores that will generate this calming sound all night long so you don't have to worry about turning it on each time you go back to bed.

#13. Use Blackout Curtains: Blackout curtains can help to reduce light and improve your sleep quality.

Blackout curtains are a great way to improve your sleep quality. By blocking out light, blackout curtains can help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. They also reduce noise levels in the bedroom, making it easier for you to relax and drift off into dreamland.

In addition to helping with sleep, blackout curtains can also be beneficial during the day. If you work from home or have children who take naps during the day, blackout curtains will keep their rooms dark so they can get some restful shut-eye.

When shopping for blackout curtains, look for ones that are made of thick fabric and have a tight weave. This will ensure that no light is able to penetrate through them. You should also make sure that they fit snugly against your windows so there aren't any gaps where light could come in.

By investing in some good quality blackout curtains, you'll be able to enjoy better sleep at night and more peaceful days during the day!

#14. Use a Sleep Mask: A sleep mask can help to reduce light and improve your sleep quality.

Using a sleep mask can be an effective way to improve your sleep quality. By blocking out light, the mask helps you fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. It also helps reduce distractions from outside sources such as street lights or passing cars that may otherwise disrupt your slumber.

The darkness created by wearing a sleep mask triggers the release of melatonin, which is essential for regulating our circadian rhythm and promoting restful sleep. Additionally, it can help keep you in a deep state of relaxation throughout the night so that you wake up feeling refreshed and energized.

When choosing a sleep mask, look for one made with breathable fabric like silk or cotton that won't irritate your skin. Make sure it fits comfortably around your eyes without being too tight or loose. You should also consider investing in an adjustable strap so that you can customize the fit to suit your needs.

#15. Use a Cooler Room Temperature: A cooler room temperature can help to improve your sleep quality.

Using a cooler room temperature can be an effective way to improve your sleep quality. When you lower the temperature of your bedroom, it helps to signal to your body that it is time for rest and relaxation. This allows you to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer throughout the night. Additionally, a cooler environment can help reduce stress levels which further contributes to better sleep.

When setting up your bedroom for optimal sleeping conditions, aim for a temperature between 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit (15-19 degrees Celsius). If this range isn't comfortable enough for you, try using layers of blankets or sheets so that you can adjust as needed without having to change the entire room's temperature.

In addition to adjusting the thermostat in your bedroom, there are other ways you can create a cool environment conducive for good sleep. Consider investing in blackout curtains or shades if sunlight is streaming into your room during bedtime hours. You may also want to consider purchasing cooling mattress pads or pillows designed specifically with comfort and breathability in mind.

#16. Use a Comfortable Mattress: A comfortable mattress can help to improve your sleep quality.

A comfortable mattress is essential for getting a good nights sleep. It should be supportive enough to keep your spine in alignment, yet soft enough to cushion your body and relieve pressure points. The right mattress can help you fall asleep faster, stay asleep longer, and wake up feeling refreshed.

When shopping for a new mattress, it's important to consider the size of the bed as well as the type of material used. Memory foam mattresses are popular because they contour to your body shape and provide superior support while still being comfortable. Latex mattresses are also great options since they offer excellent breathability and durability.

It's also important to test out different types of mattresses before making a purchase. Spend at least 15 minutes lying on each one so that you can get an accurate feel for how it will work with your body type and sleeping style.

#17. Use a Comfortable Pillow: A comfortable pillow can help to improve your sleep quality.

Using a comfortable pillow is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your sleep quality. A good pillow should be supportive and provide enough cushioning for your head and neck, while still allowing them to remain in a neutral position. It should also be made from breathable materials that wont trap heat or moisture, which can lead to discomfort during the night.

When choosing a pillow, consider factors such as size, shape, material type and firmness. You may need to experiment with different types before finding the right one for you. If possible, try out pillows in store before making a purchase so you can get an idea of how they feel against your body.

Once you have found the perfect pillow for yourself, make sure its properly cared for by washing it regularly according to manufacturer instructions. This will help keep it clean and free from dust mites or other allergens that could disrupt your sleep.

#18. Avoid Naps During the Day: Napping during the day can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided.

Avoiding naps during the day is an important part of getting a good nights sleep. Napping can disrupt your natural circadian rhythm, making it harder to fall asleep at night and stay asleep throughout the night. Additionally, if you nap too late in the day or for too long, it can make it difficult to wake up feeling refreshed in the morning.

If you find yourself needing a nap during the day, try taking one earlier in the afternoon and limit its length to no more than 30 minutes. This will help ensure that your body still has enough energy left over for when you need to go to bed later on.

It's also important to create a consistent sleep schedule so that your body knows when it's time for rest and relaxation each day. Going to bed and waking up around the same time every day helps keep your internal clock regulated which makes falling asleep easier.

#19. *Avoid Bright Lights Before Bed: Bright lights can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided in the evening.*

Avoiding bright lights before bed is an important part of getting a good nights sleep. Bright lights can interfere with your bodys natural circadian rhythm, which regulates when you feel sleepy and when you feel alert. When exposed to bright light in the evening, your body may think it is still daytime and not produce melatonin, the hormone that helps you fall asleep. This can lead to difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep throughout the night.

To avoid this disruption to your sleep cycle, try dimming the lights in your home as bedtime approaches. If possible, turn off any electronic devices such as TVs or computers at least an hour before going to bed so that their blue light does not affect your ability to fall asleep. Additionally, consider using blackout curtains or shades on windows if there are streetlights outside that could be shining into your bedroom.

By avoiding bright lights before bedtime and creating a dark environment for sleeping, you will be able to get better quality rest each night and wake up feeling more refreshed in the morning.

#20. *Avoid Stimulants Before Bed: Stimulants can interfere with your sleep and should be avoided in the evening.*

Avoiding stimulants before bed is an important part of getting a good nights sleep. Stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine, and certain medications can interfere with your bodys natural sleep cycle by making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. Caffeine in particular can remain in the body for up to 8 hours after consumption, so it should be avoided at least 6-8 hours before bedtime. Nicotine also has stimulating effects that can make it difficult to relax and get comfortable enough to fall asleep.

In addition to avoiding stimulants close to bedtime, there are other things you can do to ensure a restful nights sleep. Establishing a regular routine of going to bed at the same time each night helps your body recognize when it's time for sleep. Avoiding screens (TVs, phones, tablets) right before bed is also recommended since they emit blue light which suppresses melatonin production—a hormone responsible for regulating our circadian rhythm.