

Wholesome Yoga Therapy Sleep Hygiene Guide

A gentle, practical guide to better rest.

Good sleep is not about perfection. It's about creating supportive conditions for your nervous system to feel safe enough to rest. Small, consistent shifts can make a meaningful difference—especially if you live with pain, stress, or fatigue.

1. Create a Consistent Rhythm

Our bodies love predictability.

- Go to bed and wake up at roughly the same time each day (including weekends if possible)
- Aim for a regular wind-down routine in the last 30–90 minutes before bed
- If you don't sleep well one night, keep your wake-up time steady the next morning

Why it helps: Consistency supports your circadian rhythm (your internal clock), making it easier to fall asleep over time.

2. Prepare Your Sleep Environment

Your bedroom should encourage rest and safety.

- Keep the room cool, dark, and quiet
- Use soft lighting in the evening; avoid bright overhead lights
- Reserve the bed for sleep and intimacy (not work, scrolling, or worrying)
- Use supportive pillows or bolsters to reduce discomfort

Pain-friendly tip: Gentle positioning, extra pillows, or a body pillow can help reduce nighttime pain sensitivity.



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3. Be Mindful with Light & Screens

Light strongly affects sleep hormones.

- Get natural daylight exposure early in the day if possible
- Dim lights 1–2 hours before bedtime
- Reduce screen use in the evening, or use blue-light filters
- Avoid scrolling in bed—especially emotionally stimulating content

Why it helps: Darkness encourages melatonin release, which supports sleep onset.

4. Support the Nervous System Before Bed

Sleep improves when the body feels safe.

- Try slow breathing (longer exhales than inhales)
- Gentle stretches, restorative yoga, or legs-up-the-wall
- Body scanning or guided relaxation
- Warmth: a bath, shower, or cozy blanket
- Aromatherapy: scents such as lavender, sandalwood, jasmine, and ylang-ylang promote relaxation and lower stress

If you live with chronic pain, calming the nervous system can reduce pain amplification at night.

5. Watch Evening Habits

Small choices add up.

- Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening
- Eat your last large meal at least 2–3 hours before bed
- Limit alcohol—it disrupts deep sleep
- Stay hydrated during the day, but reduce fluids right before bed
- Journaling: writing down thoughts, worries, or even gratitude can provide closure, help you fall asleep faster, and reduce stress



Bedtime Routine Checklist & Reflection Prompts

A gentle, flexible support for winding down

Use this checklist as an invitation, not a rulebook. You do not need to do everything. Even one or two supportive practices can help signal safety and rest to your nervous system.

Evening Wind-Down Checklist (30–90 minutes before bed)

- Dim the lights in my space
- Turn off or silence non-essential notifications
- Change into comfortable sleep clothing
- Have my last drink of the day
- Prepare my bedroom (cool, quiet, dark, cozy)
- Set out anything I'll need in the morning
- Step away from work or mentally stimulating tasks

Nervous System Support

- Slow breathing (longer exhale than inhale)
- Gentle stretching, yin, or restorative pose
- Body scan or guided relaxation
- Legs up the wall or supported rest
- Warm bath, shower, or heat pack
- Light self-massage (neck, jaw, hands, feet)
- Soft music, white noise, or silence



Bedtime Routine Checklist & Reflection Prompts

Mind & Emotional Unwinding

- Write a short “brain dump” to clear my mind
- Note one thing I handled well today
- Acknowledge any pain, fatigue, or emotions with kindness
- Read something calming or familiar
- Practice gratitude or a calming affirmation

In-Bed Transition

- Phone out of reach or out of the bedroom
- Comfortable sleep position with pillows or supports
- Gentle breath awareness and allow body to rest without force

Night-Time Reflection Prompts

- What does my body need right now to feel safer or more at ease?
- Where can I let go of effort tonight?
- What went well today?
- What can wait until tomorrow?
- How can I be kind to myself if sleep is difficult tonight?



Bedtime Routine Checklist & Reflection Prompts

If Sleep Doesn't Come

- Rest is still beneficial, even without sleep
- I can get up briefly and return when sleepy
- This moment does not define my night or tomorrow

How to Set Bedtime Intentions

1. Decide on a key feeling or goal for your sleep (e.g., peace, relaxation, gratitude).
2. Use Affirmations: Repeat positive statements to yourself, e.g.:
 - "I am at peace with my day and release all worries".
 - "I have done my best today and now deserve to rest".
 - "My mind is calm, and my body is ready to rest".
 - "I am safe and surrounded by love".
 - "I welcome a good night's sleep and will wake refreshed".
3. Visualize Letting Go: Imagine worries or to-do lists floating away, knowing they'll be there tomorrow if needed, but not now.

This checklist is a support tool. Please adapt it to your needs and energy levels.

