

Sleep Hygiene Reset

The 30-Day Protocol: Light, Wind-Down, Phone Boundaries, Sustain.

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Before You Start

- Pick a start day. Ideally a Monday after a normal weekend.
- Buy a \$15 sunrise alarm or commit to stepping outside within 10 minutes of waking.
- Tell one person you are doing this. Accountability raises completion by roughly 2x.
- Expect Week 1 to feel worse before Week 2 feels better. That is normal.

Sleep hygiene protocols fail when they try to fix everything at once. This 30-day plan stacks one change per week: light first (because it anchors your entire circadian system), then wind-down (the 90 minutes before bed), then phones (the single biggest nightly disruptor), then sustain (turning the three changes into defaults). If you only do Week 1 you will still sleep better.

10 min

Morning Sunlight Target

90 min

Wind-Down Window

1 hr

Pre-Bed Phone Curfew



Chapter 1: Week 1: Light Anchoring

Your circadian rhythm is set by light, not by willpower. The goal this week is to give your eyes a big, unambiguous light signal at the same time every morning, and to dim everything aggressively after sunset. That is the whole week.

The morning light rule

Within 30 minutes of waking, get 10 minutes of outdoor light. Cloudy days still count; outdoor overcast is brighter than the brightest indoor room. No sunglasses. Drink coffee on a balcony or walk around the block. If sunrise is later than your wake time (winter), a 10,000-lux lamp for 20 minutes is a valid substitute.

The evening dim rule

Starting 2 hours before bed, kill all overhead lights. Use lamps at eye level or lower, with warm bulbs under 2700K. Your bathroom counts; a bright bathroom at 10pm ruins your melatonin curve.

Week 1 Actions

- Step outside within 30 min of waking, every day, rain or shine
- Install warm bulbs (under 2700K) in bedroom lamps
- Turn off all overhead lights by 2 hours before bed
- Log wake time and light exposure minutes in the diary

Chapter 2: Week 2: The Wind-Down Protocol

A wind-down is a fixed 90-minute script between 'work mode' and 'in bed'. The brain is not a light switch; you cannot close a laptop and be asleep in 10 minutes without a ramp. Pick a version below and run the same script every night of Week 2.

The 90-30-0 wind-down

T-minus	Activity	Purpose
90 min	Last food, last caffeine	Digestion ends before sleep
60 min	Dim lights, screens off	Melatonin rises
45 min	Warm shower or bath	Core temp drops on exit
30 min	Book, stretch, journal	Cortical wind-down
15 min	Teeth, room prep, water	Zero decisions left
0 min	Lights out	Sleep window opens

[TIP] Why a warm shower

The post-shower temperature drop mimics the natural evening body-temperature dip that signals sleep. A 10-minute shower 45 minutes before bed is one of the highest-leverage sleep habits in the research literature.



Chapter 3: Week 3: Phone Boundaries

The phone is the single biggest nightly disruptor for most adults. This week is hard. You will fail the first two nights and succeed the rest. That is a win.

1. One hour before bed, plug the phone in outside the bedroom. Yes, outside.
2. Buy a \$10 alarm clock so the phone has no bedside reason to exist.
3. Turn on Do Not Disturb from 9pm to 7am, every day, starred contacts only.
4. Move social apps off the home screen. Out of sight, out of thumb range.
5. If you wake at night, do not check the time. The number wakes you further.

Example: Sample Week 3 bedside reset

Bedside: book, water, alarm clock, earplugs

Not bedside: phone, tablet, laptop, Apple Watch charger

Phone dock location: kitchen counter

DND schedule: 9:00pm to 7:00am

Starred contacts: partner, parent, manager (emergencies only)



Chapter 4: Week 4: Sustaining the Reset

Week 4 is not new rules. It is the audit week: what stuck, what slipped, what to lock in permanently. Pick two of the three pillars to make permanent; the third becomes situational.

The sustain audit

Sustain Audit Checklist

- Rate each pillar 1-10 for how automatic it now feels
- Pick your weakest pillar and commit to 14 more days of tracking
- Lock the two strongest pillars in your calendar as non-negotiable blocks
- Schedule a 30-day check-in on your calendar for next month
- If any pillar scored under 4, restart that week's protocol from day one

[NOTE] Relapse is normal

Travel, illness, newborns, and grief all reset your sleep baseline. Running Week 1-3 again takes 21 days total and is always available to you. The protocol does not expire.

Chapter 5: The 3am-Wake Playbook Card

Most adults wake once or twice between 2am and 4am. The wake is not the problem; the problem is the 40 minutes of ceiling-staring that turns a 30-second wake into a lost hour. Here is the card. Tape it to your nightstand.

Time Since Wake	Action
0-5 min	Do nothing. Keep eyes closed. Slow breath, 4 in, 6 out.
5-15 min	If still awake, get out of bed. Keep lights off.
15-25 min	Sit on the couch. Read a boring book by dim lamp.
Back sleepy	Return to bed. Do not check the time.
Dawn	If still awake at dawn, start the day. Do not nap before 2pm.

What not to do at 3am

- Do not check your phone. Any screen resets your melatonin.
- Do not eat. Food restarts the digestive cycle and raises core temperature.
- Do not do work 'while you are up'. That trains your brain to treat 3am as productive.
- Do not drink alcohol as a sleep aid. It fragments the second half of the night.

Chapter 6: 30-Day Calendar Template

Print this and stick it on the fridge. Each day, mark the three pillars with a check or X. The pattern across 30 days tells you more than any single night does.

Day	Light (morning 10 min)	Wind-Down (90 min)	Phone Out (60 min)
1	[]	[]	[]
2	[]	[]	[]
3	[]	[]	[]
4	[]	[]	[]
5	[]	[]	[]
6	[]	[]	[]
7 (review)	Score /7	Score /7	Score /7
...
30 (audit)	Score /30	Score /30	Score /30

Chapter 7: Sleep Diary Sheet

A one-line-per-day diary beats a fancy tracker for most people. Keep it on the nightstand. Fill it in once, in the morning, before coffee.

Date	Bed	Lights Out	Wakes	Wake Time	Quality 1-10	Notes
4/21	10:30p	10:45p	1 (3am, 8min)	6:40a	7	Long walk day
4/22	11:15p	11:40p	2	6:45a	5	Late coffee, wine
4/23	10:20p	10:30p	0	6:30a	8	No phone in room

[TIP] What to track, what to ignore

Quality score (1-10) and number of wakes are the two numbers worth watching. Total time in bed lies; a bad 9 hours is worse than a clean 7. Look at the 7-day average, never a single night.

Important Disclaimer

This guide is educational. It is not medical advice. Persistent insomnia, loud snoring, or daytime sleep attacks warrant an evaluation with a sleep physician or CBT-I therapist.

Thank you.

If this helped, we have more.

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