



THE DAILY SLEEP OPTIMIZATION *Playbook*



**FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO WAKE UP
SHARPER, STRONGER, AND MORE
ENERGIZED**

SLEEP IS A PERFORMANCE ENHANCER

- SLEEP IS NOT SIMPLY RECOVERY TIME. IT IS THE DISTINCT BIOLOGICAL STATE IN WHICH THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, ENDOCRINE SYSTEM, AND METABOLIC SYSTEM REORGANIZE THEMSELVES. IF THOSE SYSTEMS ARE UNSTABLE, EVERYTHING BUILT ON TOP OF THEM - TRAINING OUTPUT, BODY COMPOSITION, COGNITION, EMOTIONAL REGULATION - BECOMES LESS PREDICTABLE.
- SLEEP QUALITY IS DETERMINED PRIMARILY BY TWO FORCES:
- SLEEP PRESSURE, WHICH BUILDS THE LONGER YOU ARE AWAKE AND THE MORE METABOLICALLY ACTIVE YOU ARE.
- CIRCADIAN RHYTHM, WHICH IS YOUR INTERNAL TIMING SYSTEM, ANCHORED BY LIGHT EXPOSURE AND CONSISTENCY.
- WHEN THOSE TWO ARE ALIGNED, SLEEP ONSET IS EASIER AND STAGE DISTRIBUTION IS MORE STABLE. WHEN THEY ARE MISALIGNED, PEOPLE EXPERIENCE DELAYED SLEEP, SHALLOW SLEEP, OR EARLY WAKING.
- THE GOAL IS NOT PERFECT EXECUTION OF THIS PLAYBOOK BUT RATHER CONSISTENT EXECUTION.



THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. FIXED WAKE TIME (SEVEN DAYS PER WEEK)

- WAKE TIME IS THE STRONGEST BEHAVIORAL ANCHOR YOU CONTROL.
- YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM ADJUSTS PRIMARILY BASED ON REPEATED MORNING CUES. IF WAKE TIME SHIFTS DRAMATICALLY FROM WEEKDAY TO WEEKEND, HORMONE TIMING SHIFTS WITH IT - INCLUDING CORTISOL RISE AND MELATONIN RELEASE.
- KEEPING WAKE TIME WITHIN 15-30 MINUTES DAILY (YES, EVEN WEEKENDS) STABILIZES:
 - THE MORNING CORTISOL PEAK
 - THE BODY TEMPERATURE CURVE
 - THE TIMING OF MELATONIN THAT NIGHT
- BEDTIME CAN FLEX SLIGHTLY BASED ON SLEEP PRESSURE. WAKE TIME SHOULD REMAIN STABLE.



2. MORNING LIGHT WITHIN 30 MINUTES

- LIGHT IS THE DOMINANT EXTERNAL INPUT TO YOUR CIRCADIAN CLOCK.
- MORNING LIGHT SUPPRESSES RESIDUAL MELATONIN AND ALSO SIGNALS TO THE BRAIN THAT BIOLOGICAL DAY HAS STARTED. THAT SIGNAL DETERMINES WHEN MELATONIN WILL RISE AGAIN THAT NIGHT.
- OUTDOOR LIGHT IS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE INTENSE THAN INDOOR LIGHT, EVEN ON CLOUDY DAYS. FIVE TO FIFTEEN MINUTES OUTSIDE IS TYPICALLY ENOUGH TO MEANINGFULLY REINFORCE TIMING. MORE IS BETTER, AND YOU'LL NEED MORE ON CLOUDY DAYS.
- IF IT'S BEFORE SUNRISE OR INCLEMENT WEATHER, A 10,000LUX DAYLIGHT LAMP REPLACES THE SUN INDOORS. WORST CASE, MAKE THE INDOOR ENVIRONMENT AS BRIGHT AS POSSIBLE.
- WITHOUT MORNING LIGHT, THE INTERNAL CLOCK DRIFTS LATER, WHICH MAKES SLEEP ONSET PROGRESSIVELY MORE DIFFICULT.



THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

3. EARLY MOVEMENT

- GETTING UPRIGHT AND MOVING SHORTLY AFTER WAKING ACCELERATES THE TRANSITION FROM SLEEP STATE TO FULL ALERTNESS.
- MOVEMENT INCREASES HEART RATE, RAISES CORE TEMPERATURE, AND REINFORCES THE WAKE SIGNAL. REMAINING IN BED SCROLLING (OR SNOOZING) PROLONGS SLEEP INERTIA AND DELAYS FULL NEUROLOGICAL ACTIVATION.
- YOU DO NOT NEED INTENSE EXERCISE HERE. YOU NEED SIGNAL CLARITY. AN EASY WALK, SOME STRETCHING, OR OTHER LIGHT MOVEMENT IS ALL YOU NEED. DOING MORE INTENSE MOVEMENT IS NOT BAD, THOUGH.



4. CAFFEINE DISCIPLINE

- CAFFEINE WORKS BY BLOCKING ADENOSINE RECEPTORS. ADENOSINE IS THE MOLECULE THAT BUILDS SLEEP PRESSURE ACROSS THE DAY. CAFFEINE DOES NOT GIVE YOU ENERGY, IT MAKES YOU NOT FEEL TIRED. GOOD SLEEP WILL GIVE YOU ENERGY!
- USING CAFFEINE EARLY IS NOT INHERENTLY PROBLEMATIC, ALTHOUGH IT IS RECOMMENDED TO WAIT AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER LIGHT AND MOVEMENT TO USE IT. YOUR FIRST LIQUIDS OF THE DAY SHOULD BE A LARGE GLASS OF WATER, WITH ELECTROLYTES IF NEEDED. USING CAFFEINE LATER IN THE DAY REDUCES THE DEPTH AND PROPORTION OF SLOW-WAVE SLEEP AND REM. EVEN IF YOU CAN FALL ASLEEP AFTER A DOUBLE ESPRESSO, THE ARCHITECTURE OF YOUR SLEEP IS STILL DISRUPTED.
- CUTTING CAFFEINE AT LEAST 8-12 HOURS BEFORE BED ALLOWS ADENOSINE TO ACCUMULATE NORMALLY. IF SLEEP FEELS SHALLOW, CAFFEINE TIMING IS ONE OF THE FIRST VARIABLES TO EVALUATE HONESTLY.



THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

5. TRAINING TIMING

- EXERCISE INCREASES SLEEP PRESSURE AND STRENGTHENS THE DAYTIME RISE IN CORE TEMPERATURE. THAT'S BENEFICIAL.
- HOWEVER, SLEEP ONSET REQUIRES A DROP IN CORE TEMPERATURE AND SYMPATHETIC TONE. FINISHING HIGH-INTENSITY TRAINING TOO CLOSE TO BEDTIME KEEPS HEART RATE, CORTISOL, AND TEMPERATURE ELEVATED LONGER THAN IDEAL.
- FINISHING INTENSE TRAINING AT LEAST THREE HOURS BEFORE BED GIVES THE SYSTEM TIME TO TRANSITION TOWARD RECOVERY MODE.



6. FINAL MEAL TIMING

- DIGESTION IS METABOLICALLY ACTIVE. LARGE MEALS RAISE CORE TEMPERATURE AND INCREASE SYMPATHETIC ACTIVITY.
- BECAUSE SLEEP ONSET DEPENDS PARTLY ON TEMPERATURE DECLINE, FINISHING YOUR FINAL SUBSTANTIAL MEAL THREE TO FOUR HOURS BEFORE BED REDUCES INTERFERENCE WITH THAT DROP.
- AT THE SAME TIME, GOING TO BED HUNGRY CAN INCREASE STRESS SIGNALING AND WAKEFULNESS. THE GOAL IS TO AVOID BOTH EXTREMES - NOT HEAVY, NOT STARVING.



THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

7. ALCOHOL

- JUST STRAIGHT UP AVOID IT. BUT BEING REALISTIC, ALCOHOL IS A LARGE PART OF OUR SOCIETY, SO WE NEED TO AT LEAST BE SMARTER ABOUT IT.
- ALCOHOL REDUCES SLEEP LATENCY INITIALLY BECAUSE IT IS SEDATING. HOWEVER, IT FRAGMENTS SLEEP LATER IN THE NIGHT, SUPPRESSES REM SLEEP, AND ELEVATES NIGHTTIME HEART RATE.
- PEOPLE OFTEN INTERPRET FALLING ASLEEP QUICKLY AS GOOD SLEEP. SLEEP ARCHITECTURE IS WHAT DETERMINES RECOVERY. ALCOHOL CONSISTENTLY DEGRADES THAT ARCHITECTURE.
- IF YOU ARE GOING TO DRINK, KEEP IT MODERATE, AND FINISH SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE SLEEP.



THE BEDROOM ENVIRONMENT (LAST NON-NEGOTIABLE)

8. BEDROOM ENVIRONMENT

DEEP SLEEP REQUIRES A SENSE OF SAFETY AND PHYSIOLOGICAL COOLING. WE NEED TO REDUCE AS MANY SENSORY INPUTS AS POSSIBLE.

- DARKNESS SUPPORTS MELATONIN SIGNALING AND ALSO PREVENTS STRONG WAKENING
 - USE BLACKOUT CURTAINS OR A FACE MASK
 - COVER ANY LIGHTS FROM POWER STRIPS, CHARGERS, OR OTHER DEVICES
 - AVOID ANY LIGHT LEAKAGE AROUND DOORS
 - IF YOU GET UP TO USE THE BATHROOM, AVOID BRIGHT LIGHTS OR ANY LIGHTS AT ALL. A DIM RED OR AMBER NIGHT LIGHT IN THE BATHROOM WOULD BE FINE.
- COOLER TEMPERATURES SUPPORT THE CORE TEMPERATURE DROP REQUIRED FOR SLEEP INITIATION.
 - MAXIMUM BEDROOM TEMPERATURE OF 68F. COOLER IS BETTER.
- STABLE SOUND PREVENTS MICRO-AROUSALS FROM UNPREDICTABLE NOISE.
 - USE A FAN OR WHITE NOISE MACHINE
 - THERE IS SOMETIMES A USE-CASE SCENARIO FOR FALLING ASLEEP TO MEDIA (MORE PSYCHOLOGICALLY RELATED)
- AIR QUALITY IS IMPORTANT
 - USE A FAN FOR CIRCULATION TO PREVENT STAGNATION
 - USE A HUMIDIFIER IF THE ROOM IS UNDER 40% RH
 - AVOID ANY INCENSE, FRAGRANCES, OR OTHER STRONG ODORS IN THE BEDROOM
- SUPPORTIVE MATTRESSES AND PILLOWS KEEP YOU COMFORTABLE AND SHOULD MINIMIZE MOVEMENT TRANSFERENCE. DO NOT CHEAP OUT ON BEDDING!!
- GOOD QUALITY SHEETS AND BLANKETS KEEPS YOU COOL AND COMFORTABLE.
- PETS AND KIDS SHOULD BE OUT OF THE ROOM TO PREVENT INTERRUPTIONS.
- AVOID WORKING, WATCHING TV, LONG PERIODS OF SOCIAL MEDIA, OR OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE BEDROOM AT ALL TIMES. THE BRAIN MAKES ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN TASKS AND SETTINGS. THE BEDROOM SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH ONLY BEDROOM ACTIVITIES.

IF THE ENVIRONMENT SIGNALS ALERTNESS, THE NERVOUS SYSTEM RESPONDS ACCORDINGLY.



II. UNDERSTANDING SLEEP STAGES

SLEEP PROGRESSES IN ROUGHLY 90-MINUTE CYCLES:

- STAGE 1 → STAGE 2 → STAGE 3 (DEEP SLEEP) → BACK TO STAGE 2 → REM
- EARLY IN THE NIGHT, DEEP SLEEP DOMINATES. DEEP SLEEP IS WHEN GROWTH HORMONE PULSES OCCUR AND PHYSICAL RESTORATION IS PRIORITIZED.
- LATER IN THE NIGHT, REM SLEEP DOMINATES. REM SUPPORTS EMOTIONAL PROCESSING, LEARNING, AND MEMORY INTEGRATION.

THIS DISTRIBUTION EXPLAINS WHY:

- GOING TO BED LATE DISPROPORTIONATELY REDUCES DEEP SLEEP.
- WAKING EARLY DISPROPORTIONATELY REDUCES REM.
- FRAGMENTATION EARLY HARMS PHYSICAL RECOVERY.
- FRAGMENTATION LATE HARMS COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL PERFORMANCE.

TOTAL HOURS MATTER, BUT STAGE PROTECTION MATTERS AS WELL.



III. DAYTIME VARIABLES THAT IMPROVE NIGHT SLEEP

DAYTIME LIGHT EXPOSURE

- STRONG DAYTIME LIGHT EXPOSURE INCREASES CIRCADIAN AMPLITUDE - THE CONTRAST BETWEEN DAY AND NIGHT.
- IF YOU SPEND THE ENTIRE DAY IN DIM INDOOR LIGHTING, THE NERVOUS SYSTEM HAS DIFFICULTY DISTINGUISHING BIOLOGICAL DAY FROM NIGHT. THAT WEAKENS MELATONIN TIMING LATER.
- A BRIEF OUTDOOR EXPOSURE (5-15) MINUTES IN THE LATE MORNING OR EARLY AFTERNOON REINFORCES THE DAY SIGNAL.



MOVEMENT & CORE TEMPERATURE RHYTHM

- CORE BODY TEMPERATURE RISES DURING THE DAY AND FALLS AT NIGHT. A STRONGER DAYTIME RISE ALLOWS FOR A CLEARER NIGHTTIME DECLINE.
- SEDENTARY DAYS FLATTEN THIS RHYTHM. FLATTENED RHYTHMS MAKE SLEEP ONSET SLOWER AND DEEP SLEEP LESS PREDICTABLE.
- MOVEMENT DOES NOT NEED TO BE EXCESSIVE. IT NEEDS TO EXIST CONSISTENTLY.



III. DAYTIME VARIABLES THAT IMPROVE NIGHT SLEEP

STRESS REGULATION

- HIGH, UNBROKEN SYMPATHETIC TONE DURING THE DAY TENDS TO CARRY INTO THE NIGHT.
- SLEEP ONSET REQUIRES PARASYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE. IF STRESS IS CONTINUOUS AND UNMANAGED, CORTISOL DECLINE MAY BE DELAYED.
- BRIEF RESETS - WALKING, BREATHING, STEPPING AWAY FROM SCREENS - ARE OFTEN SUFFICIENT TO PREVENT CUMULATIVE STRESS CARRYOVER.



NAPS

- SHORT NAPS UNDER 30 MINUTES CAN REDUCE SLEEPINESS WITHOUT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING NIGHTTIME SLEEP PRESSURE.
- LONG OR LATE NAPS REDUCE ADENOSINE ACCUMULATION AND CAN DELAY NIGHTTIME SLEEP ONSET.
- KEEP THEM BRIEF AND BEFORE THE EARLY AFTERNOON.



IV. THE FOUR-HOUR TRANSITION WINDOW

SLEEP SHOULD FEEL LIKE THE CONTINUATION OF A PROCESS ALREADY UNDERWAY.

FOUR TO THREE HOURS BEFORE BED

- FINISH EATING.
- FINISH INTENSE TRAINING.
- CLOSE MAJOR COGNITIVE LOOPS.

THIS PREVENTS METABOLIC AND COGNITIVE STIMULATION FROM EXTENDING INTO THE NIGHT.



THREE TO TWO HOURS

- BEGIN DIMMING LIGHTS AND MOVING THEM DOWN UNDER EYE LEVEL. THE BRAIN INTERPRETS OVERHEAD LIGHT AS A DAYTIME SIGNAL, SUPPRESSING MELATONIN.
- AVOID NEW HIGH-STAKES TASKS.
- AVOID EMOTIONAL CONFLICT.
- JOURNAL
- SAUNA/HOT SHOWER

LIGHT INTENSITY IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT HERE BECAUSE MELATONIN BEGINS TO RISE IN THIS WINDOW.



IV. THE FOUR-HOUR TRANSITION WINDOW

TWO TO ONE HOUR

- KEEP LIGHTING LOW AND WARM COLORS, ~2500K
- ENGAGE IN PREDICTABLE, LOW-STIMULATION ACTIVITIES.
- EVERYTHING SHOULD BE STARTING TO WIND DOWN, VOLUME SHOULD BE DROPPING
- PREPARE THE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT.

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM SHOULD BE TRANSITIONING TOWARD PARASYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE.



FINAL HOUR

- BEDROOM COOL, DARK, QUIET.
- DEVICES OUT OF REACH.
- SIMPLE, REPEATABLE ROUTINE.

BED IS FOR SLEEP, NOT PREPARATION.



V. IF YOU CANNOT SLEEP

REMAINING IN BED AWAKE FOR EXTENDED PERIODS TRAINS THE BRAIN TO ASSOCIATE THE BED WITH WAKEFULNESS.

IF UNABLE TO SLEEP AFTER 20-30 MINUTES:

- GET UP.
- GO TO A DIMLY LIT AREA.
- ENGAGE IN SOMETHING LOW STIMULATION (NOT YOUR PHONE)
- RETURN TO BED WHEN SLEEPY.
- TRY NSDR ROUTINE OR OTHER MEDITATIVE/BREATHING STRATEGY.

THIS PRESERVES CONDITIONING.



VI. TRACKING

WEARABLES ARE USEFUL FOR TRENDS, NOT SINGLE-NIGHT JUDGMENTS.

LOOK FOR:

- SLEEP EFFICIENCY ABOVE ~85%
- REASONABLE DEEP AND REM PROPORTIONS
- RESTING HEART RATE TRENDING DOWNWARD
- HRV TRENDING UPWARD ACROSS WEEKS

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FOLLOWS CONSISTENT PHYSIOLOGICAL PATTERNS, NOT PERFECT NIGHTS.



VII. SUPPLEMENTS (OPTIONAL, NOT FOUNDATIONAL)

THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTS AND PEPTIDES/SMALL MOLECULES ARE OFTEN FOUND IN SLEEP STACKS. I WILL NOT DISCUSS DOSING, TIMING, ETC. THE EXACT PROTOCOL VARIES PER PERSON AND THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS/REQUIREMENTS.

S TIER (STRONGEST EVIDENCE / MOST CONSISTENT)

- MAGNESIUM (GLYCINATE, THREONATE, TAURATE FORMS)
- GLYCINE
- MELATONIN (LOW-DOSE PHYSIOLOGICAL RANGE)
- L-THEANINE

A TIER (GOOD EVIDENCE / CONTEXT-DEPENDENT)

- ASHWAGANDHA (KSM-66, SENSORIL)
- APIGENIN
- VALERIAN ROOT
- LEMON BALM
- TART CHERRY EXTRACT
- TRYPTOPHAN
- 5-HTP
- PHOSPHATIDYLSERINE

B TIER (MODERATE / MIXED EVIDENCE)

- GABA (ORAL)
- CBD
- MAGNOLIA BARK
- REISHI MUSHROOM
- PASSIONFLOWER
- SKULLCAP
- INOSITOL
- CHAMOMILE EXTRACT (CONCENTRATED FORM)
- GLYCINE + NAC COMBINATIONS
- THEACRINE (FOR CIRCADIAN MODULATION CONTEXTS)

C TIER (LIMITED / EMERGING / INCONSISTENT HUMAN DATA)

- KAVA
- HOPS EXTRACT
- CALIFORNIA POPPY
- LAVENDER (ORAL)
- TAURINE
- ZINC
- VITAMIN B6 (PYRIDOXINE)
- NIACINAMIDE
- ALPHA-GPC (INDIRECT VIA REM MODULATION CONTEXTS)

PERFORMANCE / STRESS MODULATORS SOMETIMES INCLUDED IN SLEEP STACKS

- CREATINE
- RHODIOLA ROSEA
- OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS
- VITAMIN D (IN DEFICIENCY STATES)

PEPTIDES

- DSIP (DELTA SLEEP-INDUCING PEPTIDE)
- EPITALON (EPITHALON)
- PINEALON
- TESAMORELIN (RESEARCH SUPPLY MARKETS)
- SERMORELIN (RESEARCH SUPPLY MARKETS)
- CJC-1295 (DAC AND NO-DAC)
- IPAMORELIN
- GHRP-2
- GHRP-6
- HEXARELIN
- SELANK
- SEMAX
- MOTS-C
- BPC-157
- OXYTOCIN (RESEARCH SUPPLY)
- VIP ANALOG FRAGMENTS (RESEARCH SUPPLY)
- PACAP FRAGMENTS (RESEARCH SUPPLY)
- OREXIN ANTAGONIST PEPTIDE FRAGMENTS (RESEARCH STAGE)

NON-SUPPLEMENT SMALL MOLECULES (COMMONLY FOUND IN RESEARCH / GREY MARKETS)

- PHENIBUT
- PICAMILON
- ETIZOLAM (RESEARCH MARKETS)
- THC (JURISDICTION DEPENDENT)
- FULL-SPECTRUM CANNABINOID BLENDS

ADAPTOGENS AND PEPTIDES MAY SUPPORT STRESS RESILIENCE OR RECOVERY, BUT THEY DO NOT REPLACE WAKE-TIME CONSISTENCY AND LIGHT DISCIPLINE.

IF FUNDAMENTALS ARE UNSTABLE, ADVANCED TOOLS PRODUCE MINIMAL RETURN.

