



SUPERCHARGE YOUR SLEEP

7 SURE-FIRE WAYS TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR
SLEEPING HABITS FOR A MONTH WITHOUT
MIGRAINES

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About the author:

Erin Knight is a certified Functional Diagnostic Nutrition® practitioner with a passion for helping people reach their full potential. She spent the last decade studying techniques to optimize health and performance. After fighting back from a debilitating cascade of migraines, digestive issues and chronic fatigue, she committed to sharing her knowledge with others who are ready to take charge of their wellness.

THE SECRET TO QUALITY SLEEP

When asked about the top secrets to a long and happy life, thought leaders and health professionals consistently name getting quality sleep in their top 3.

HOLD ON, IT IS NO SECRET THAT SLEEP IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR HEALTH.

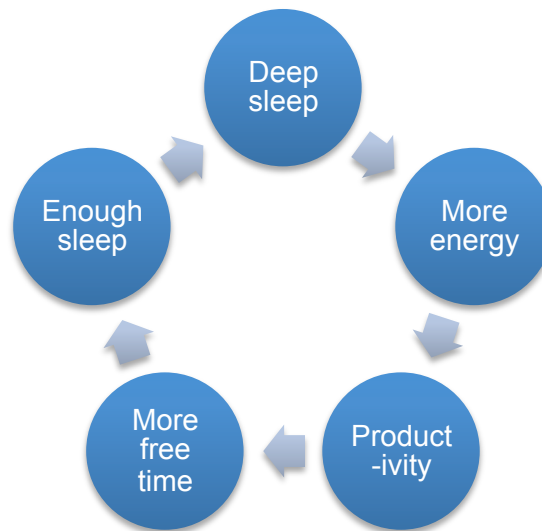
THE SECRET IS HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN, RIGHT?

What I have found is that our sleep habits create either a vicious cycle of being “tired and wired” or a **virtuous cycle**, the often-overlooked cousin of the vicious cycle. A virtuous cycle is a situation where successful results are self-propagating, like compound interest in your bank account.

Can you think of a time when you had a work out goal, like a 5k, that you were training for and suddenly you found yourself avoiding junk food and feeling so good and full of energy that you started taking the stairs instead of the elevator? That is a virtuous cycle!

Similarly, one or two tweaks to your evening routine can snowball into a big impact on your health and happiness. When I started making sleep a very high priority, if not the #1 priority in my day-to-day health habits, I started to feel changes that made me want to keep at it. When I am well rested, I can think more clearly, form a plan to get things done and then knock it out in a way that can never happen when I am tired. Ironically this enables me to be more efficient and leaves me more time for sleep at the end of the day.

THUS THE SECRET TO GETTING MORE SLEEP IS TO START SLEEPING WELL TO IMPROVE YOUR EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY FIRST.



Why is sleep so critical for your brain function?

Academic research shows that:

- Memories are stored during sleep (1)
- Toxins flushed out (2)
- Sleeping on a problem sets the stage for insight (3)

You probably don't even need to read the studies to be convinced that sleep is important. Just think, how do you feel after a great night of sleep?

I FEEL FANTASTIC

For years I scraped by on 6-7 hours of sleep. Dragging myself into the office, holding my eyelids open during training classes and long meetings. So *painful*... I know you know what I am talking about.

Did you know that when the average person has had only 6 hours of sleep, they experience the mental impairment of someone with a 0.05 blood alcohol level? The comparisons with drinking don't stop there. Studies have shown that people get used to a certain level of brain fog and fatigue and will report feeling fine – just like the guy at the party who has had too much to drink and perceives that he is “fine” to drive home! It takes several days of quality sleep for the study participants to emerge from the fog and realize what it feels like to be rested.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN LIVING IN A FOG?

I finally got my act together and made it a priority to start following all the advice you read about over and over like sleeping consistent hours week days to weekends, not falling asleep with the TV on and avoiding caffeine in the afternoons and evenings. As I started to notice what a difference a good night's sleep made, I started to wonder if there was more that I could be doing and started researching sleep hacks incessantly (because that's what I do). After reading research and listening to countless hours of experts talk about how to get the deepest, most restful sleep I found that a few things are quoted across the board as being successful (I tried them and these worked for me too!)

MY TOP 7 SLEEP STRATEGIES

1. AVOID BLUE LIGHTS BEFORE BED

Why? Blue light disrupts natural melatonin production. Even 5 minutes of staring at your iPhone, TV or tablet can shut off this important sleep hormone and antioxidant and make it difficult for you to get to sleep.

How? Work towards strictly eliminating screen time at least 30 minutes before bed. If you need to use the computer in the evening or enjoy watching TV to unwind, there are a few tricks to mitigate the impact in the hours before bedtime.

- Dim the screen(s).
- Get blue-light filtering glasses.
- Use a browser like Eye Care, Koala or Flux available for your computers and mobile devices.
- In your bedroom you may choose light bulbs emitting a warm/soft light or better yet a string of red/orange tinted LEDs instead of bright, white bulbs.



2. GO TO BED BEFORE 10PM

Why? The pineal gland receives information about the daylight from your optic nerve and helps to prepare your body for bed by releasing melatonin as it senses that the sun has set. Within one to two hours after sunset, you should naturally feel sleepy as melatonin rises. Around 10pm part of your body's metabolism gears up for the vital repair process that happens during sleep. If you are still awake you may experience this as a "second wind" that will keep you up and active until the wee hours of the night.

Unfortunately that means you are missing out on the healing and repairing benefits of this energy. This is why it is important to jump on the wave of biochemistry that your body is producing and take advantage of this natural bedtime window. The deepest most restorative sleep occurs from approximately 10pm – 2am, so don't miss out on this gift!

Timing your sleep is like timing an investment in the stock market – it doesn't (just) matter how much you invest, it matters when you invest. - Kulreet Chaudhary, M.D.

How? If you are a night owl, adjusting your bedtime might seem like a momentous task, but once you realize that your “second wind” of energy is taking away from vital repair functions in your body and brain, I hope



you will consider taking steps towards getting on an optimized rhythm.

- Don't stay up to watch late night TV or the news. Just record it on the DVR if it is something you aren't ready to skip entirely.
- Adjust bedtime gradually in 15min increments, and start getting up earlier so that you feel sleepy at night time.
- If you are struggling with this, take some time to watch the sun go down for a few days and remember tip #1 – avoid bright, blue lights in the evening because the eyes designed to tune in to the color changes that occur as the sun sets, not just the level of light and darkness.

(Note: Of course, someone has to work the night shift and that is what makes the world go round these days. Instead of feeling bad, just don't start with this one and if your life allows for a 10pm bedtime later on, remember why it is valuable.)

3. CREATE A BEDTIME RITUAL

Why? Chances are, you already have a bed time routine; certain activities that you do to prepare for sleep and the next day. Rather than accomplish practical matters (like brushing your teeth), the bed time ritual is most significant for its ability to transform your mental state to "bedtime".

How? How do we best transport our mind to a different state? By engaging our senses! Traveling around SE Asia, I have enjoyed observing the rituals performed in beautiful temples in nearly every town. What I noticed is that people are practicing their worship rituals surrounded by beautiful sculpture and painting, elegant music, and incense.



Because senses are at the core of a ritual experience, you will often hear recommendations to have a warm beverage or to take a bath before bed. Perhaps have a small glass of herbal tea or turmeric infused coconut milk, which provide a soothing warmth and pleasant taste and smell.

A bath with Epsom salts and essential oils not only gives you the opportunity to absorb relaxing magnesium through the skin and raise your body temperature which helps you drift into sleep as you cool down (practical benefits), but the warmth is soothing (activating touch), the

scented water smells nice and if you have candles or some nice art in the bathroom, the experience can be visually stimulating as well.

Well that is all well and good, but I don't know about you, I have time to take a bath about once a week if I am lucky. So what do I do the rest of the week??



I like to focus on activating the sense of smell because for many of us, smells trigger the strongest memories. For example, the smell of cinnamon and cloves

might remind you of baking cookies with Grandma or the smell of horses may remind you of a summer job. Well you can very quickly train your brain to "remember" that lavender (or chamomile, or any other pleasant, relaxing essential oil) means it is time to go to sleep. When I discovered this trick or "hack" it felt like pure magic. Quick, affordable and easy to remember if I keep it right by my bed.

Here are 4 easy ways to incorporate your favorite essential oil into a bedtime ritual. Which one sounds most appealing to you??

- Put 10 drops in water into a 1oz glass spritz bottle and give your pillow a few spritzes before bed.
- Rub a drop onto the sole of each foot, where it is easily absorbed into the body.
- Put a drop in one palm and then rub your hands together and inhale the scent with 3 deep breaths.

- Turn on a diffuser when you start to change your clothes and brush your teeth so your room fills with a light mist of your favorite oil.

4. TRY TOPICAL MAGNESIUM

Why? Magnesium, along with calcium, salt and potassium, regulate how blood vessels contract and relax. When we are under stress, our bodies burn through magnesium at an increased rate. This phenomenon is caused not only by mental and emotional stress, but hidden internal stressors like food sensitivities, viruses, taking Rx and over the counter drugs or being exposed to heavy metals in pollution or dental work! As you can imagine, a lot of us could use supplemental magnesium.

How? Magnesium absorbs readily through the skin, which is why taking an Epsom salt bath is recommended to relax tense muscles and help you relax for bedtime. If you don't have time for a daily bath, try a topical magnesium gel in the evening after you brush your teeth.

5. PUT YOUR PHONE ON AIRPLANE MODE IF YOU KEEP IT BY THE BED.

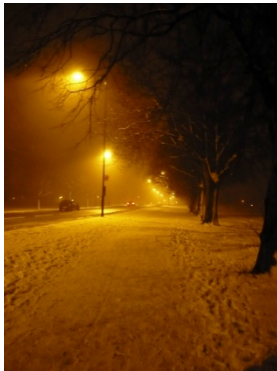
Why? While study results continue to be inconsistent, there is a lot of investigation going on into possible harmful effects of our constant exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), including disruption of sleep quality. As much as sleep quantity, I value my sleep quality even more(bang for the buck, right?) and would rather be on the cautious side until the long term biological effects of relatively new technology



like cell phones pan out. Even if you are highly skeptical, putting your device on airplane mode will keep you from being woken up by texts and emails. I remember one day last year when I forgot to do this and was woken up at 5am when someone from my carpool texted me a completely irrelevant question assuming I was already up. That is when I got serious about turning my phone onto airplane mode.

How? Under settings, slide the option for Airplane mode over to on. Yes, your alarm will still work.

6. SLEEP IN COMPLETE DARKNESS



Why? Artificial light, whether it is from street lamps, cars driving by or electronics in your bedroom is **several hundred times brighter than the light from the moon or stars** and affects the quality of sleep. While it may not affect the hours that you are asleep, light exposure has been shown to impact how deeply you sleep. Let's try asking why not? This is an easy one to try and see what benefits you reap because it doesn't require a huge lifestyle change or time investment.

How? Get blackout curtains or shades. Remove nightlights or at a minimum replace them with ones that have a red/orange light. Remove electronics that glow from the bedroom or put a piece of electrical tape over the LED lights.

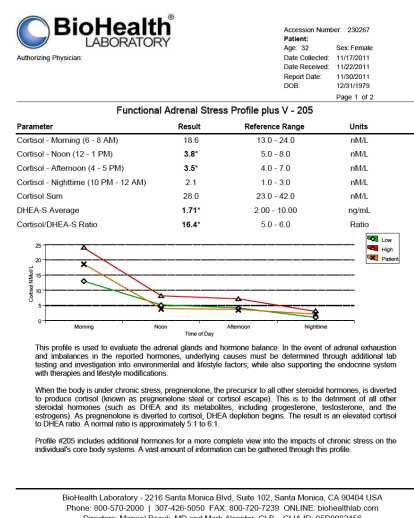
7. SLOW DOWN TWO HOURS BEFORE BED.

Why? If you are having trouble getting to bed by 10pm or falling asleep, it is worth taking a look at your typical evening. If you are pumping out cortisol in response to stimulus (positive or negative), the cortisol can override the subtler hormonal cascade that is trying to lure you to sleep.

How? Avoid things that raise your adrenaline like watching a scary TV show, calling someone that you know will get you riled up, surfing controversial message boards, or even a hard workout. "But what if evenings are the only time I can work out?" you are thinking. It is more important for your health to get a good night's rest. Once you are sleeping well, you will likely notice your productivity during the day improve so much that you can squeeze a workout in at a more appropriate hour.

8. BONUS PRO TIP: MEASURE YOUR CORTISOL PATTERN

Why? Cortisol plays a part in regulating a healthy circadian rhythm. It should naturally be highest in the morning and slowly drop mid-day and be at a low point in the evening. Irregular patterns can give clues about underlying malfunctions in the body that warrant further investigation. For example, extra-high cortisol in the morning can indicate blood sugar issues during sleep. High cortisol before bed can highlight a circadian rhythm issue that may need more attention and explain why it is



difficult for you to get to sleep.

How? Measure cortisol levels 4 times throughout the day to see if there is a disrupted pattern. The most accessible way is with an at home saliva test (I offer this with my [FDN programs](#)).

What is Functional Diagnostic Nutrition anyway?

Functional Diagnostic Nutrition® (FDN) is a systematic health restoration program in which the goal is to find and correct the root causes of bodily malfunction and health complaints. FDN® involves a process of investigating, analyzing, and continuous course correction until optimal function of the body is achieved. Ultimately, FDN® is a self-care model in which the client is empowered through education to take responsibility and control of his or her own health.

What makes FDN different?

- We focus on the cause not the symptoms
- We test for hidden imbalances – stop guessing
- We respect biochemical individuality and custom tailor each program
- We give you the tools and knowledge to optimize your biology

WHERE DO I START?

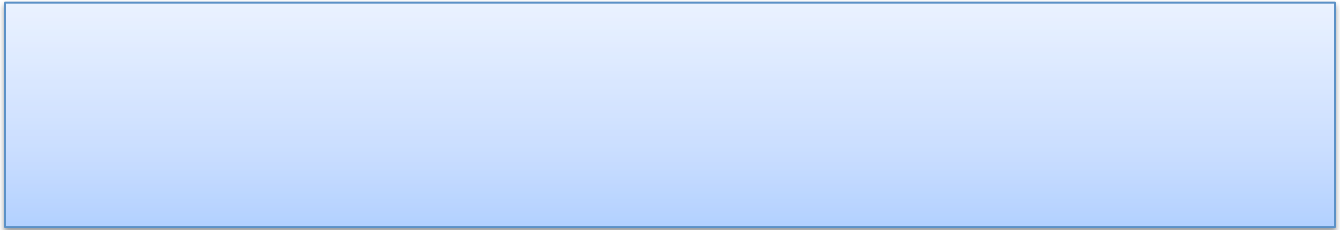
Start with the “hack” that seems easiest for you to implement and make it a goal to do it for 7 days before trying the next one. Even if it takes you 7 months to incorporate these tips (that is about how long it took me!), you will be taking steps in the right direction and quickly start to notice the impact. As you notice the incremental improvements, you will find more time, energy and motivation to add the next one in, so don’t worry if 8 steps seems like too much to start with right now. Take the first step today! Use the action planner below to pick your first “hack” and decide how you are going to make it happen. **(Keep reading for a special offer!)**

Which of the 8 steps seems like a good place for you to start:

What resources do you need to implement it?

What roadblocks or hurdles could get in your way, and how can you plan to work around each one?

What would making this step towards improving your sleep do for you? For example, you might be thinking “If I was more rested, I could think on my feet better and give great presentations at work” or “If I wasn’t sleep deprived all the time, I could kick my latte habit”. What is your motivation?



When you have mastered the basics, then we can talk about upping your game with toys like grounding sheets, sleep induction matts or supplements. In fact, once you have picked your first goal and started to implement it, send your worksheet over to me at erin@engineeringradiancance.com and let me know how you are doing!

SPECIAL OFFER

If you complete this action planning activity and email it to me, I offer a complementary 45-minute sleep strategy session where we can talk in more depth about how you can achieve the deepest, most refreshing sleep of your life! Absolutely no selling, no-strings attached. Just a special thank you for actually committing to upgrading your sleep habits and working towards optimal health.

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