

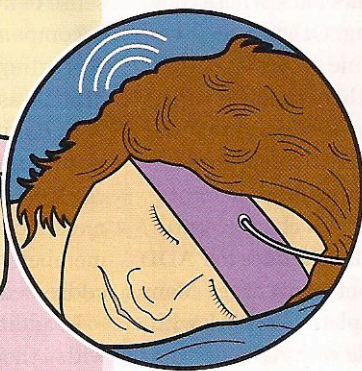
HELP YOURSELF



FIVE WAYS TO ... FALL ASLEEP FASTER

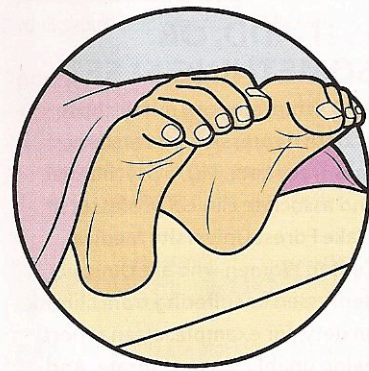
Simple tricks that help you get a good night's sleep.

POOR SLEEP IS NOTHING TO YAWN AT—it takes a toll on everything from your job performance and sex life to overall health. And in women it's been associated with feelings of hostility, depression, and anger, as well as higher risks of diabetes and heart disease. Here, real ways to get the zzz's you need. —BRITTANI RENAUD



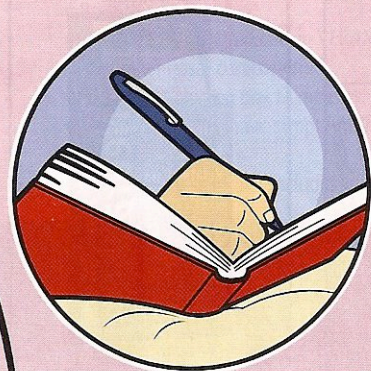
1. NIX ANNOYING NOISES

A snoring husband, that beeping delivery truck—whatever keeps you awake—tune it all out with a relaxing soundtrack. (Check iTunes for downloads of sleep-friendly sounds.) For comfort, try SleepPhones (\$59.95; SleepPhones.com), thin speakers inside a soft fleece headband; they're especially nice for side-sleepers.



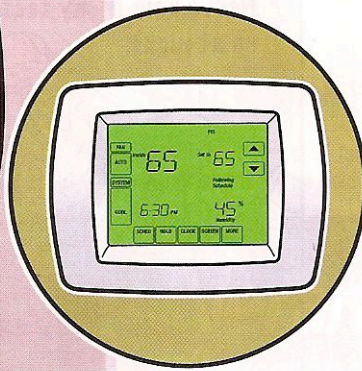
2. PREP YOUR BODY

When you hit the sack, try this progressive relaxation technique, says Catherine Darley, ND, director of the Institute of Naturopathic Sleep Medicine in Seattle. Curl your toes tightly for a count of seven, and then relax. Repeat through each muscle group, working up from your toes to your neck.



3. TAKE NOTES

Your daily routine affects how well you sleep. A sleep log can help you make those connections, says Stephanie Silberman, PhD, author of *The Insomnia Workbook*. Every day, record how much caffeine you drink, when and how much you exercise, what you eat, when you go to bed and wake up, and your total sleep time. Share the log with a sleep specialist. (Find one at SleepCenters.org.)



4. KEEP COOL

People doze off easier and sleep better when the room temperature is on the cooler side, according to Silberman. Set your thermostat to around 65 degrees or lower. If perimenopausal night sweats or hot flashes make you kick off the covers, then try a cooling mattress pad, moisture-wicking sheets, or a pair of breathable cotton pajamas.



5. RELAX RIGHT

Instead of mulling over the day's events when you get in bed, try journaling about the big stuff at least two hours earlier, so your mind's not racing when you turn in, Darley says. Right before bed, try a relaxing imagery exercise: Picture any tranquil scene, like a day at the beach. Over time, the new routine will help cue your brain to settle down. ●

Health.com TRYING A PILL? Before you take a sleeping med, read up on the potential side effects at Health.com/sleep-drugs.