

REPORT

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SLEEP DEFICIT

Is insomnia driving you mad? Here's how you can fall asleep anywhere, and through anything.

Sleeping. It should be easy enough to do – just lie down and close your eyes. So why can't we do it a lot of the time? And sometimes, even if we managed that, why do we still wake up feeling exhausted? Because as simple as it seems, a lot can come between us and our rest, counting anxiety, noise and caffeine.

When You Don't Sleep

Recent studies show that more and more women are spending the night tossing and turning, watching the clock and popping sleeping pills. One sleepless night can make you tired, irritable and unable to focus, but a chronic insomnia can take a heavy toll on your health.

- It's bad for your heart: It raises cytokines, proteins that activate immune responses. They're great when you need them, but when you don't, they can become a source of inflammation associated with heart disease.
- It zaps your immune system: It saps white blood cells, crucial blockers of infections and cancer.
- And affects your memory: It elevates cortisol levels, which can damage the hippocampus, the part of the brain that helps create new memories. It can also interfere with learning and make emotions difficult to manage.
- Insomnia might make you fat: It lowers levels of leptin, a hormone that tells the body when it's had enough to eat and raises levels of ghrelin, which stimulate you to eat more.

Create A Sleep-Inducing Environment

- Dim the lights an hour before bedtime. This mimics sunset. Smack in the middle of your brain is something called the pineal gland. It releases melatonin, the hormone that readies the mind and body for sleep in response to lowered light levels.
- Use the bed only for sleep and sex; keep your bedroom free from distractions. No Internet, no TV, no exercise. You have to let your body and mind slow down to be able to slip into sleep.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, cool and comfortable. Invite sleep into your boudoir with an aromatherapy candle or essential oil blend. Let the gentle aromas slowly diffuse into the air for a calming, sleep-enhancing ambience.

- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine: Take a bath. Soak away your cares and de-stress with a nourishing bath oil. Massage in a body oil to soothe and induce further relaxation. Finally, prepare your bed by spritzing the tranquil benefits of a relaxing pillow mist infused with essential oils onto your pillow and sheets.

Skincare That Works While You Sleep

A good night's sleep gives skin, hair and nails the ability to renew and repair damage. Consider these new natural alternatives that incorporate plant extracts and soothing aromas that encourage deep slumber.

Kenzo *Belle Du Jour* (\$205) contains the hardworking properties of the white lotus that not only puts your skin but also your mind and body into a state of rest. Clinically proven to reduce cortisol levels, the luscious cream offers protection, stimulates cellular metabolism and promotes well-being for dull, stressed skins.

Clarins *Aqua Essence Evening Infusion* (\$65) is an herbal lotion with a high concentration of plant extracts. Perfect for tired skins, it combines the soothing benefits of camomile, passionflower extract, linden and Japanese cherry tree to enable you to wake up to well-rested skin.

Dr Andrew Weil For Origins *Night Health Bedtime Face Cream* (\$123) is an emollient moisturiser that employs potent plant actives to enhance the skin's natural restorative ability. While buckbean and St Paul's wort extracts soften visible lines, wheat bran and olive extracts repair skin's protective barrier to minimise damage.

Biotherm *Celluli Laser Intensive Night Treatment* (\$87) is a revolutionary formula that continues to burn fat and improve skin microcirculation even when the body is at rest, diminishing cellulite and water retention.