

EFFORTLESS SLEEP



Sleep Tips For Serious Athletes

So you say you're serious about wanting to be an elite athlete? Do you really want to reach those goals? Really?

Really?

Seriously?

I'm not buying it and here's why...

Odds are...you're not getting enough sleep.

In fact, a recent poll of NCAA Division One athletes said that 27% of all athletes don't get enough sleep.

That's one out of every four athletes basically saying they aren't really all that serious about their athletic careers.

So how about you? Are you a good sleeper? Do you get enough? Or do you struggle with your sleep? Do you stay up too late? Do you struggle to get to sleep after a late-game or practice?

Well listen...you're not alone. But that's not an excuse to continue in that way.

For some of my athletes, their parents are horrible sleepers. They stay up late and complain that they are "always" having trouble going to sleep, getting to sleep, falling asleep, and staying asleep.

Then they complain they get up to pee too many times! That household influence can drastically affect how an athlete feels about sleeping.

I wanted to put together this resource for you so you can think about the way you think about sleep. The way you approach sleep, and what you can do to improve your sleep.

So here goes...

Create Your Sleep Space

Having a sleep space that you're excited to actually sleep in can be really helpful for getting to sleep and then staying asleep once you get there. Here are some tips to creating that space:

- Get your room as dark as possible.
- Use an eye mask or have a soft t-shirt to put over your eyes to keep as little light from reaching your eyes as possible.
- Avoid bright lights in general after 8 PM to help signal your brain it's time to sleep.
- Use earbuds to play binaural beats or white noise while you sleep.
- Run a fan in your room to drown out background sounds that can wake you up.
- Keep the room cool (18C or 68F) and use a high-quality duvet to sleep under.

Prepare To Have a Great Nights Sleep

Going to bed with a great attitude can really help get to sleep and stay there. If you're dreading going to sleep you're probably not going to have a great night's sleep. Just like your attitude matters going into an event, so does your attitude affect your sleep.

- Be sure to wind yourself down well before you try to fall asleep. I'd give yourself two hours, at least.
- Take a bath or a nice relaxing shower to help signal your body.
- If your bed is cold, consider using a heating pad to help warm things up a bit, but keep the room cool.

- Set an alarm to remind yourself that it's time to shut it down and get some sleep.
- Avoid working out late at night, if you can. But know that even if you do you can get yourself ready to go to sleep by following these steps.
- A little yoga or meditation can help relax the body before bed.
- Don't get sucked into some long movie on your phone. Avoiding that bright light before you sleep is key. Read a mellow book instead.
- Brain dump: Take a pad of paper and a pen and just write down everything that is on your mind. Your brain is more apt to relax knowing all those important ideas are captured and it's not worried about losing them.

If You Have Trouble Sleeping: Think Routine. Routine. Routine.

Having sleeping rituals and getting to sleep at the same time every night is really important. Your body has a natural rhythm and the more you can stick to a sleep schedule, the easier it is to get to sleep and stay there.

- Set a window of time that you will always get to bed. Maybe 8:00-8:30.
- Avoid hitting your "second wind". You probably have time at night when you start to yawn but you stay up past it. That's your second wind. Try to take advantage of that first window of opportunity to fall asleep.
- Avoid technology at least an hour before you want to fall asleep. Phone. TV. Computer. iPad. Let your eyes relax and signal the brain for darkness and not light.

- Dim the lights in your bedroom and bathroom where you get ready to prep to go to bed.
- Use some melatonin but don't use it all the time. It may be the push you need to get to sleep and once your routine is set then you won't have to rely on it anymore.
- Set some sleep habits and stick to them. This is especially true in the summer when outside light tends to signal the brain to stay awake longer.

What To Do During The Day To Sleep Better At Night

While we can get super-focused on what to do at night to sleep better, there are plenty of things you can do during the day to help you have the best chance of getting to sleep when night time comes.

Consider the following:

- Getting up early! Seriously, if you're sleeping in too late you haven't "burned" enough energy during the day for your body to want to sleep.
- Go to bed early so you can get up early. It's a cycle, so if you get to bed early you're going to get up early.
- Maintain your physical output. If you've been training hard, and long, and then you go on vacation...your body is having a what-the-heck moment. Maintaining consistent sleep and energy output is important. Big changes matter.
- Avoid napping. While I'm a huge fan of naps, they can affect when you get to sleep at night. So if you're having trouble at night, do everything you can during the day to create fatigue so your body is looking forward to your rest at night.

- Use a [Whoop strap](#) to help you manage your energy out and sleep needs to take mood out of the equation. I love mine and it's changed the way I train even with all of the experience I have.

Use Supplements and Nutrition Tweaks to Sleep Better

While I prefer to do things au-natural there are always things you can ingest that may help you get to sleep and stay there. I'll give you a shortlist here but know this, your body does have an ability to sleep and sleep well. It's been ingrained in us for years. I would only lean on this list once you've exhausted everything else.

- Don't drink too much late in the day. I'm all for hydration, but if you've got to get up to pee...well...that's going to wake you up. Duh.
- Magnesium and Zinc can help. Use Melatonin only in a pinch.
- Read a really, really, really boring book. Tax law maybe?
- Chamomile tea? (Pinky out of course!)
- For some people, a late meal can actually help you sleep better. For others, it can cause distress. See what works for you. Again, a [Whoop strap](#) can help you track the changes that help you. I'm a big fan.

Today's Athlete Uses As Many Of These Tricks As Possible

Many of the athletes we work with come to us using some of these ideas but never all. And sleep is probably the #1 "supplement" an athlete can take. But we know how hard it can be to apply these tips and stick with them. Don't give up

too soon. You're not going to change in a day. But if you stay committed you're sure to see significant changes in your sleep quality and your results in your particular sport.

About Jonathan Edwards and AthleteSpecific.com

After years of dealing with athletes who had been let down by their coaches and programs, Jonathan Edwards set out to create the most impactful mental performance coaching programs for aspiring athletes and their families. This isn't a watered-down sport psychology theory. This is in-the-trenches, backed by science, real-world, programming by athletes for athletes. If you've got an athlete with big dreams, book a Breakthrough Call to see what programs we have that will fit your aspirations. The call is free. The insight is priceless.

www.AthleteSpecific.com/call



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