



BREEDLOVE
COUNSELING

PLAN FOR BETTER SLEEP

*In peace
I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, Lord,
make me dwell in safety.
Psalm 4:8*



Simple and effective ways to improve sleep habits

PLAN FOR BETTER SLEEP

During times of stress, seasons of grieving or caretaking, healing from trauma, or when wrestling with persistent anxiety, caring for the body is crucial. Good sleep supports physical, spiritual, emotional and mental healing. When the body is processing emotional wounds, it needs restorative care.



When Elijah was being threatened, he experienced fear and he even had thoughts of death. His stress response led him to flee into the wilderness. He was exhausted physically and emotionally.

He said, "I have had enough, Lord. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he laid down under a bush and fell asleep.

The angel of the Lord came to him, provided food and then Elijah sleeps again. The angel of the Lord comes back to him a second time and says, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." Following this experience Elijah encounters the Lord in a gentle whisper, and the Lord gave him guidance and direction. We can learn from Elijah's experience with fear and real danger that his body needed sleep and sustenance.

ELIJAH : I KINGS 19

DAYTIME

Preparing for sleep

- avoid caffeine at least six hours before bedtime
- include healthy food choices during the day
ex: fruits and vegetables.
- At least four hours before bedtime avoid: foods and beverages with high sugar content
- Foods/drinks that may help promote sleep:
nuts: cashews, almonds, walnuts, pistachios,
herbal tea: chamomile, valerian, lavender, passionflower
- No blue light 30 minutes to an hour before bed, use blue light blocker filters on all electronic devices
- Exercise during the day 10-20 min (walking is enough)
- Set up a healthy sleep routine for your evening (same time, same process)



Create your sleep routine

A simple routine that is repeated each night can help signal to your brain, it is time to transition into "sleep mode."



- Stretching or yoga
- Deep breathing (4-6-8 method: deep breath in for 4 sec, hold for 6 sec, slow exhale for 8 sec)
- Writing down your thoughts "brain dump style"
- Reading (avoid any material that you notice increases strong emotions, or ruminating thoughts)
- Thinking through the alphabet A-Z things you are thankful for, or characteristics of God for each letter
- Thinking through an activity with multiple sequential steps: a recipe you like to make, your schedule for the next day, a project you need to work on (pick activities that feel neutral and not activating to your system)
- Trying out [progressive muscle relaxation](#)

IDEAS TO GET
STARTED

SLEEP STORIES

- Sleep stories are audio recorded stories with a slow cadence of speech with calm neutral themes to help lull you to sleep. It is like a bedtime story for adults.
- Tip: Try to visualize the scenes being described and focus on slow, deep breathing.
- Here is a sleep story about [Esther](#) you can try out.
- You can also find a variety of Christian sleep stories and meditations on the [Abide YouTube Channel](#)



Create your sleep routine

Consider picking one to three of the ideas in this sleep plan to try each week.

Keep it simple and focus on consistency.

Remember it may take time for your body to adjust, be patient with yourself.



Tap on the verses below to listen to the passage:

- [Psalm 3:5](#) "I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me."
- [Psalm 4:8](#) "In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety."
- [Psalm 121:3-4](#) "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth... indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." He is always watching over you, present with you in the middle of the night.

SCRIPTURE
MEDITATION

TROUBLESHOOTING

If you are struggling with getting to sleep or staying asleep, evaluate your sleeping environment:

- Where are you sleeping? (bed, couch, chair, floor, etc.)
- Are there any distracting lights and sounds?
- Is the room too warm?
- If you sleep with someone, how is this impacting your sleep:
 - children moving in the bed?
 - spouse snoring?
 - emotional feelings of unease, or unresolved conflict with the person you sleep with?



If you lay in bed for thirty minutes to an hour and still can't sleep, get up for 20-30 minutes to read, journal, or do some slow stretches. Keep lights and activity low and slow. Try to stay off of electronic devices. Repeat your sleep routine.

Take some time to write or draw out your sleep plan on the next page.

Consider including what you will do during the day and in the evening to promote sleep. Make a note of what you will do in the middle of the night if you wake up.



MY SLEEP PLAN

DAYTIME

EVENING

DEEP NIGHT

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