



the *natural* professional



The *Insomniac's* Guide
to Relaxing

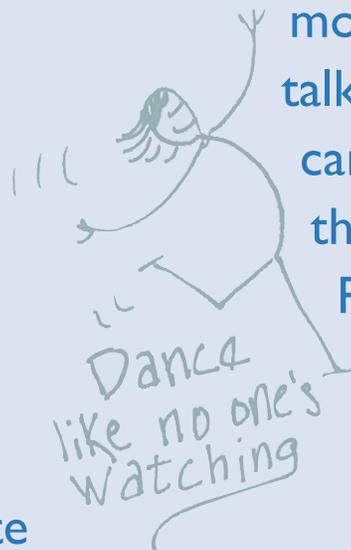
which hopefully leads to sleep

A tutorial brought to you by The Natural Professional

In our fast-paced lives, the source of the issue is that we humans are uniquely able to trigger adrenaline response in ourselves by our own thoughts (which happens to be the main source of stress and anxiety!)

In turn, excess amounts of adrenaline in your body make it tough to sleep. (There are a lot of other detriments to stored up adrenaline but we're talking about sleeping here.)

The cheap and easy way to release excess adrenaline: Exercise, plain and simple. I'm not talking about a five-minute



mosey around the block. I'm talking about a good 20 minutes of cardio. Sweat. Breathe heavy. Flush that stuff out of your body. Daily. Preferably earlier in the day so as not to excite your body too much late in the day.

Exercise isn't our only suggestion.

Following are three approaches to inviting rest in the evening. One will likely speak to you more strongly **work with that one.**

Avoid Stimulation

Stimulation! Tough, I know, I know. We spend our entire day getting and seeking stimulation that the thought of cutting it off is rough (not to mention hard).



The specific suggestions are not as important as your **tuning in to what sends the zingers to your system.**

- ▶ **2nd half of day:** no TV or news, no excessive booze, caffeine, cigarettes, chocolate, sweets, refined sugar, fruit, peppermint, juice.
 - ▶ **No screens one hour before bed.** Not even a glance. This means no email, phone calls, movies.
 - ▶ **Un plug and shut off devices,** cover bright lights (power strips, charging lights, any ambient glow) and eliminate buzzing (turn off unneeded power strips, put phones on airplane mode).
- ▶ **Watch your external stimulants** 1 hour (or more!) before bedtime. For ex, page-turner books, stimulating music, work or ToDo related conversations.

Approach 2

Create a Routine



Repetition lets your mind know what to expect, without the use of sedatives.* You can also set the stage by creating triggers in your room that suggest it's a place for your mind and body to rest.

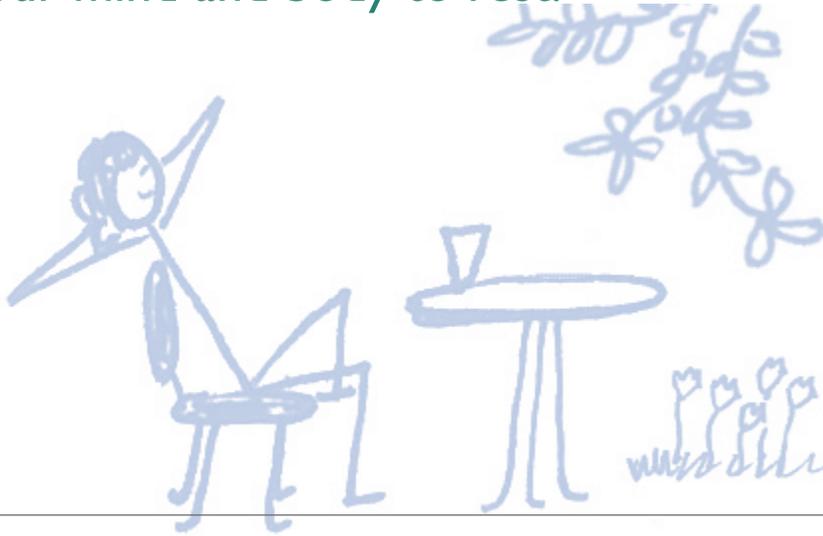
First, set the stage:

► **Make your bedroom a work-free zone.**

Make it a sacred space, a Healthy You space.

► **Get a lamp with dimmer** and have it on low or cover with a scarf for mood-lighting.

► **Reserve the bed for sleeping/resting** (okay, snuggling and whoopie are encouraged, too)—and definitely no working.



* If possible, avoid sedatives... they often wake you up when they wear off and, ideally, you want to train your mind to relax on its own.

Then, put together your own routine that will best help you relax using the following ideas as a push off point:

- ▶ **A few hours before bed:** do your Daily Preview, prep anything to make your morning easier (lay out clothes, pack lunch, fill water bottle, wash travel mug, prepare your work bag)... anything that will help you feel cared for & prepped for the next day.



- ▶ **Tell yourself at least an hour before bedtime that you are preparing for sleep.** Say it out loud. Remind yourself that any remaining activities are to support this intention.
- ▶ **Hydrate throughout the day** so you don't need water right before bed. Have a cup of relaxing tea 30 minutes before bed... our suggestions are tea blends that have chamomile, lavender, passion flower and other soothing herbs.

- ▶ **Take a bath.**
- ▶ **Listen to a relaxing guided meditation.**
- ▶ **Do a calming breathing exercise.**



- ▶ **Contemplative reading.** Be aware of whether your chosen text has a soothing or stimulating affect on you.



- ▶ **Restorative yoga poses.** Legs, hips, shoulders, neck, forearms, back, jaw and mouth... any areas that may hold tension. You might not want to do this right before hitting the hay because it can boost blood flow and energy that may stimulate you.
- ▶ **Spritz bed with a lavender essential oil spray** or place a sachet on your bedside table; avoid stimulating scents like peppermint or citrus.
- ▶ **Repeat a mantra.** This both reminds you of what you should be doing as well as prevents potentially stimulating thoughts from gaining a foothold. Some mantra ideas (use only one): It's sleepy time; Slow down; Lower gear; Mellow mama; Calm down; Time to rest; Time to wind down; Get grounded.
- ▶ **When you lay down, recall the sensation of being deeply relaxed,** like how you feel after a good massage. Whenever a thought comes into your head, lazily think: *Relaxing...*

Approach **3**

Reign in Your Mind



Perhaps the most effective *and* the hardest to do. All too often, it's **the thoughts in your head** that keep the nervous system at attention and flooding the body with stress hormones making it incredibly difficult to sleep.



If you're dealing with short-term sleep issues, the following ideas may be all you need. If, however, you're dealing with long-term chronic sleep issues and you have a hunch that it's from a deep anxiety, the best remedy will be to get to the root of it. This may involve therapy or other outside support.

► **Meditate.**

► **Place your attention on one thing.**

This is basically what the counting sheep thing is all about, i.e. focusing your mind instead of allowing it to wander all over the place.

- **One twist to the counting sheep visualization:** instead of imagining them leaping (what's calming about that?) **imagine them lazily walking by.**

► **Journal about unresolved issues** that are popping up in your head. Be aware of this turning into a bitch fest. Instead, have the intention of completion. What did you learn? What can be forgiven? What can you let go of?

► **Jot down ToDo reminders** that not-so-helpfully catch you while in bed.

► **Gratitude practice.** Write down 5 things from your day that you are grateful for. Contemplate each one until you feel a yummy heart buzz.



ahhhhh

Soft like butter
that's been sitting
on the counter
all afternoon...



► **Give your mind permission to let go until tomorrow.** It really will be OK.

► **Halt negative thoughts.** Remember how I said that we can trigger adrenaline responses in ourselves by our thoughts? **Try creating your own trigger response.** For example when you catch a negative thought in your head, think, “Stop! It’s time to soothe my nervous system. Ahhhhh.”

The importance of your mind and body getting rest really cannot be over-stated. Spending some time contemplating how you might get more of it is a worthwhile exercise that will pay off exponentially.

Of the above three approaches, which do you think will be most effective for you?
Can you clarify one or two things that you will experiment with tonight?



What else works for you? Let me know! I'd love to hear from you to know how else I can help you start feeling the way you want to feel today.

XO

Shawn

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Questions welcome privately:
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the era of disorganization is over.

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Who's behind all this?

Shawn Tuttle's mindful productivity work is driven by her passion to use business as a vehicle for giving more love to the world. Based wherever her laptop is, currently in Chiang Mai, Thailand, she bicycle commutes to the office (i.e. cafe for the day), gets her Om on daily through yoga and meditation, and is always on the look out for interesting street art to photograph.

Shawn is the Natural Professional. She's climbed Half Dome at midnight and thrived (and survived!) Burning Man in the Nevada desert. An accomplished speaker, writer, and simplification coach, all of her endeavors are guided by an inner compass attuned to harmony, freedom, and creativity.

Drawing on her experiences as Chief Easify Officer of Project Simplify, Professional Organizer, Coach, Speaker, Yoga practitioner, and sauerkraut maker she leads workshops, coaches clients (yay for Skype!), and creates multi-media tutorials.