

5 Anxiety Hacks to Help You Sleep!



Hack #1 - *Exercise*

I know. It pains me as much to write it as it pains you to read it.

The truth is, exercise is the #1 anti-anxiety remedy out there.

40 minutes a day, 5 days a week of activity will increase serotonin and reduce anxiety. Ideally exercise in the morning or mid afternoon - and not too close to bedtime

Action Step

Chart it out and check it off. Get yourself into a routine of activity to increase your heart rate. If you need accountability, ask a friend to join you.

This will work.



Hack # 2 - *Get into Routine*

Routine is essential for good mental health.

Go to bed at the same time every day, and wake up at the same time every day.

Avoid naps - even if you're sleepy. If you must nap, limit it to 40 minutes and no where near bedtime.

Action Step

Create a routine that is sustainable, and makes sense for your lifestyle.

Write it out and review it weekly to be sure it's working for you.



Hack #3 - *Avoid Electronics*

This is a doozy! And very hard for those of us who love our screen time.

Two things are essential to remember:

1. Electronics usually mean social media of some sort. Social Media is the thing anxiety feeds on.
2. The light from the screen can trick our brains into thinking it's daylight.

Ideally you reduce or eliminate screen time and electronics two hours before bedtime - but even just a little bit is better than nothing.

Action Step

Work at reducing screen time at bedtime in 10 minute increments.

Leave electronics out of your room - including your smart watch.



Hack #4 - *Have Good Sleep Hygiene*

This isn't referring to bathing - although a warm bath with epsom salts or lavender is a great way to wind down.

But, Sleep Hygiene is a fancy way to say 'set yourself up for sleep success'.

Good sleep hygiene means having a bedroom environment and a lifestyle that eases anxiety and readies your body and brain for sleep.

Action Step

Create a soothing environment. Wind down by dimming lights, closing blinds, turning off screens. Have a cool, dark bedroom.

Meditate. Deep breath. Journal. Pray. Listen to calming music.



Hack #5 - *Be Mindful*

Ok, this might seem obvious, by paying attention to what we're doing is essential for mental health.

What we put in our bodies matters.

Alcohol, caffeine, sugary foods, and foods that are high in carbs wreak havoc on our bodies, and wind us up, instead of settling us down.

If you struggle with anxiety, caffeine is best left out of your diet.

Noticing what you're eating, doing, and thinking is necessary to be well. We don't have to think the things that get dropped into our heads - we can notice them and then decide whether they are helpful or harmful thoughts.

Relacing harmful thoughts with healthy thinking is an act of the will, and will lead to improved sleep.



Hack #5 Continued -Be Mindful

Food impacts sleep. And it also impacts anxiety. For many of us, sugar, dairy, and carbs increase anxiety and even induce panic. Use caution and moderation with these.

Alcohol may seem like an effective way to manage anxiety in the moment - some people use it to help them sleep - but this is a dangerous and temporary fix.

Alcohol impairs our ability to use healthy coping strategies, and studies have shown that regular use of alcohol negatively impacts the amygdala (the area of your brain that regulates negative emotions).

Changing patterns in your life to help you reduced bedtime anxiety requires attention to detail - so pay close attention to what you think, and what you put in your body.



BONUS HACK - *Journalling*

You've heard it - but maybe you struggle to get yourself into a good journalling routine.

Let me take the pressure off....

Journalling is a wonderful therapeutic activity as long as you use it in a way that promotes improved mental health.

Here are some journalling ideas to get you started:

1. Buy a super cute journal that feels nice in your hands and has the right line spacing - online journally is ok, but for bedtime anxiety reduction we want to limit screen time.
2. Set aside 20 minutes at bedtime. So if you're aiming to be in bed with lights out at 10pm, start journalling at 9:40pm.
3. Look up quotes (only a few seconds on the phone for this one) from your favorite authors or speakers. Write out the quote in your journal.



BONUS HACK - *Journalling*

4. Now write all about the quote. Why did it stand out to you? What does it mean to you? What will you do differently in life because of this new way of thinking?

Other Journalling Options:

1. Write a gratitude journal at bedtime. Gratitude and anxiety don't play in the same sandbox. So when we focus on the things we appreciate, the wonderful people in our lives, etc, we find that anxiety is lessened.
2. Write a prayer journal. Giving all your worries to God in writing. He loves to know what's on your heart.
3. Write love letters. Love letters to your family, friends, etc - this is a funny one, but effective. It actually changes the brain and increases dopamine.



I hope you've found this helpful.

I would love to hear from you!

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Wishing you a wonderful, anxiety reduced sleep
tonight!

♡ Nicole

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