

AGE WELL PROJECT

How to sleep to age well

2 Dec 2021

Resources

The Age-Well Project

Website: <https://agewellproject.com>

Instagram: [@agewellproject](https://www.instagram.com/agewellproject)

Facebook: [@theagewellproject](https://www.facebook.com/theagewellproject)

Susan Saunders Health

Website: <https://susansaundershealth.com>

Instagram and Facebook: [@susansaundershealth](https://www.instagram.com/susansaundershealth)

Books

[*The Age-Well Project*](#) Easy Ways to Live a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life

[*The Age-Well Plan*](#) The 6-week Programme to Kickstart a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life

Disclaimer

I'm not a doctor or a nurse. I can't prescribe, I can't give you advice on individual health issues. You need to talk to your GP about those. I'm here to guide you to make your own healthy choices, and to coach you to discover what's right for you.

This session is all about my fourth rule for ageing well: sleep.

So tonight I will:

1. Give you a very simple understanding of the importance of sleep as we age.
2. I've got five key actions to follow to keep you on track with sleeping to age well – and I'll talk about the science behind each one as we go. Plus, a bonus breathing exercise at the end!

Why Is Sleep So Important As We Age?

Research papers referenced here:

Sleep Disorders in Type 2 Diabetes

Click the link to read the full article at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5628550/>

Sleep Restriction Enhances the Daily Rhythm of Circulating Levels of Endocannabinoid 2-Arachidonoylglycerol

Click the link to read the full article at:

<https://academic.oup.com/sleep/article/39/3/653/2454026>

Noradrenergic signaling in the wakeful state inhibits microglial surveillance and synaptic plasticity in the mouse visual cortex

Click the link to read the full article at:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41593-019-0514-0>

Quiz: How Are You Sleeping Now?

1. How did you feel when you woke up this morning? Rested or exhausted?
2. How many hours sleep did you get?
3. How many hours sleep have you averaged over the last week?
4. Do you sleep better or worse now than you did a year ago? Five years ago?
5. What time do you normally go to bed?
6. What time do you normally get up?
7. How much time do you spend staring at a screen in the evenings?
8. What's your wind-down routine?
9. Do you take any supplements or medication to help you sleep?
10. How comfortable is your bed?

1. **Work Towards Getting Enough Sleep – Easier Said Than Done!**
2. **Light Days and Dark Evenings**
3. **Getting Into a Routine**
4. **Get Your Sleep Environment Right**
5. **Eating And Drinking Right for Sleep**

Breathing Through A Broken Night – The Breath Control Exercise I Use

Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth and keep it there through the entire exercise.

1. Exhale completely through your mouth,
2. Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
3. Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
4. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
5. This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat stages 1 - 4 three more times for a total of four breaths. Do the whole cycle four times (i.e. 16 breaths in total).

If You Feel Short Of Breath – Breathe Normally!

MY SLEEP KIT

- Good quality supportive pillows
- Silk eye mask
- Mack's ultrasoft ear plugs
- Pink/white noise generator
- Enjoyable, but not too gripping, novel, or a book of poetry
- Essential oils – lavender, valerian, bergamot
- Herbal tea – camomile, valerian root, passionflower, lavender
- Black-out blinds
- Black-out lined curtains
- Blue-light blocking filters
- Blue-light blocking glasses
- Magnesium flakes for the bath

YOUR SLEEP TRACKER

NIGHT	Caffeine & alcohol intake, stress levels	Time went to bed	Time woke up	Quality of sleep	How you felt the day after
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

What patterns can you see here? What worked best for you?