

THE AYURVEDIC GUIDE TO The Best Sleep of Your Life



by Dr. John Douillard, DC, CAP

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The Yoga Body Diet, *Perfect Health for Kids*, and *Body, Mind and Sport*.

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General Suggestions for Sleep

Meditate Twice Daily

Meditation is, at the very least, a tool that trains you to handle stress and come to a place of peaceful awareness. According to sleep research studies, meditation supports healthy sleep cycles and improves daytime energy. (1) [Take my free meditation training here.](#)



Maintain a Regular Daily Routine

Rise, meditate, eat, work, exercise, play, and sleep at the same time every day. Go to bed by 10pm, which is the end of the kapha period, when the mind and body are naturally drowsier.

If you are not currently accustomed to being regular about your routine, start by writing down a schedule to follow for the first few weeks.

New science tells us that every gene carries a biological clock that governs when we should eat, sleep, rest, digest, and exercise. The ancient wisdom of Ayurveda is now being backed by emerging [circadian medicine](#) science. (2)

Manage Vata Digestion

If you have occasional constipation—a classic vata imbalance that is commonly linked to sleep concerns—it is of utmost importance to use natural, herbal support. Please read about the Ayurvedic 3-fruit formula, [triphala](#), as well as my bowel-toning formula that contains triphala, slippery elm bark, licorice root, and a small amount of psyllium, [Elim 1](#).

Stay hydrated with 6-9 glasses of water per day. For the first two weeks, also sip hot water throughout the day.

[Learn more about resetting digestion.](#)



Eat Vata-Pacifying Foods

Vata body types, or those with vata imbalances, are more prone to having sleep difficulties. (3) If the mind is very active at bedtime, be sure to eat a [vata-pacifying diet](#). Have an early, light supper, such as soup or hot cereal, high quality hard cheese or cottage cheese and warm milk at least three hours before bedtime.

Vata-balancing or sleep-supportive foods are generally characterized by having one or several of the following qualities:

warm, moist, oily, sweet, salty, and/or sour. Some examples include vegetable soup, steamed vegetables, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Foods that are cold, dry, uncooked, and spicy can contribute to insomnia, as they increase vata. Decrease your consumption of cool salads, chips and salsa, crackers, cold beverages, caffeine, spicy foods, etc.

If you must have dessert, have it after lunch rather than after dinner. This will allow your body to burn the sugar off during the afternoon, rather than letting it keep you up at night.



Get Outside and Play

Enjoy dynamic and more outdoor activities during the day. The more sun exposure you get during the day, the greater your production of melatonin at night. (4) [Melatonin](#) is the body's circadian sleep hormone.

Laugh and Enjoy

Be sure to enjoy some light entertainment each day. Humorous books, laughter, play, uplifting movies or being in pleasant situations with family and friends will support healthy sleep cycles. (6) When possible avoid situations which tend to cause anxiety, worry, or anger. Study after study shows that stress is linked to a variety of sleep concerns. (5)



In The Evening

Cultivate Pleasant and Relaxing Activities

Read, listen to soft music, play with children and/or animals. A short walk after dinner is helpful. After sunset, kapha qualities increase, which are heavy, calming, and sleep-inducing.

Use Gentle and Soothing Aromatherapy Oil

Use essential oils such as lavender, marjoram and chamomile, and florals like jasmine, rose and neroli in the bedroom just before going to bed.



Avoid Work that Requires Energy and Concentration

During the kapha time of night between 6 - 10PM, the nervous system and cortisol levels should be winding down. Avoid watching TV, exercise or being on your computer for at least one hour before bedtime, as it stimulates the nervous system and blocks melatonin production. Blue light filters help support melatonin production, but they do not stop the overstimulation of the mind.

Just Before Bed

Abhyanga (Daily Self-Massage)

Massage your head and bottom of your feet with [warm sesame oil](#) or ghee. **Do not overstimulate the head** by rubbing it too hard. For moderate sleep concerns, give yourself a gentle, full-body [self-massage](#) followed by a warm bath. In **post-menopausal women with sleep imbalances**, an evening, full-body oil massage significantly supports healthy sleep cycles. (7)

Drink a Glass of Warm Milk

Warm milk has certain peptides that help lower cortisol and support healthy sleep. (8)

Add a little raw honey or [chyawanprash](#) (an Ayurvedic superfood).

Saffron, nutmeg, and poppy seeds can be calming additions as well.

See the recipe for our nourishing Ojas Nightly Tonic below.

Avoid Sleeping Pills: Ayurvedic Natural Sleep Aids

Sleeping pills can interfere with the body's natural sleep responses. Try the following natural sleep aids (use one at a time until you find the one that works best for you):

- **Saffron:** Two to three threads of saffron heated in one cup of warm milk.
- **Nutmeg:** One large pinch of nutmeg stirred into one cup of warm milk.
- **Poppy seeds:** Soak ¼ to ½ teaspoon poppy seeds for a few hours in one cup of warm water or milk. Drink warm.
- **Brahmi:** One teaspoon brahmi powder steeped in 1 cup of water, or 1-2 capsules of [Brahmi-Brain](#).
- **Chamomile tea:** One teabag or 1 teaspoon loose leaves, brewed with one cup of water.
- **Sleep Easy herbal formula:** Take 2 capsules before bed or as directed by your health care professional.
- **Ojas Nightly Tonic:** A classic evening beverage of hot milk, dates, coconut, almonds, saffron, healing herbs, raw honey and ghee. See the recipe below.

Melatonin

Consider low dose melatonin for an ojas-boosting, circadian clock reset. Many sleep-seekers have tried melatonin without success, without realizing that they are **actually taking too much**.

The over-the-counter brands are typically too high of a dose that can sometimes cause an opposite reaction.

Based on this research, I formulated a [low-dose Liquid Melatonin](#) supplement where 1 drop delivers only .1 mg of melatonin.

To reset your sleep clock, I suggest taking 1-10 drops about 45-60 minutes before bed for 3 months.

[Learn why Ayurveda considers melatonin the supreme ojas here.](#)



In Bed

Adjust the Temperature

Make sure that your bedroom is comfortable and orderly, and at the right temperature. Your bedroom should be cool like a cave and not hot. Melatonin production is associated with cooler body core temperatures. (9) There should be fresh air in the room. Natural fibers are most comfortable for bedclothes and bed linens as they breathe more easily and don't trap humidity next to the skin.

Avoid Using the Bedroom for Mental Activities

In the bedroom, avoid things like reading, working, or watching TV. The bedroom should be associated with sleeping, not activity.

Keep Your Head and Feet Warm

Use a hot water bottle under your feet or on your belly, and a cotton nightcap for your head.

Turn Off Lights and Wi-Fi

Make sure the room is dark with blackout shades, eye covers, and no computers or LED lights on in the room. Put black tape over the LED on/off indicator lights.

Assume a Comfortable Position and Relax

Do not worry about sleeping. Let your mind be lazy and wander freely. Take the attitude that you will naturally get as much rest as you need, even if you are not actually sleeping. Keep the lights off and your eyes closed without minding the time. Just enjoy resting comfortably, and sleep will come naturally. Remember that we go to bed to rest, not to sleep. If you worry that not sleeping will spoil your next day, this worry (and even anger) can make it even more difficult to fall asleep.





In the Morning

Wake Up with the Sun

Try not to set your alarm clock, if possible. Get up naturally with or before the sun. Once the sun is up, whenever possible get the sun on your body—even through a window is okay.

Take your [Vitamin D](#) supplement in the morning, as morning dosing helps to reset the circadian clock for sleep.

Consider giving up caffeine. Caffeine (even in the morning) can reduce melatonin production and block the ability to enjoy deep sleep.

Morning Routine

Start the day with an [oil massage](#), a shower, [yoga](#) and [meditation](#), and you will feel fresh and rested.

Even if you feel that you have not slept well, never take the attitude that you are too tired to begin a full day's activity.

Don't think that you need to stay in bed longer to get more rest. Instead, get up and get going. Avoid napping during the day. It will then be easier to fall asleep at night.

Recipe for the Ojas Nightly Tonic

Drink one cup each night for 3 months to rebuild ojas levels to support sleep, immunity, and overall well-being.

You can learn more about building ojas in my video and article [Got Ojas? Nourish Your Vitality](#).

1. Add small amounts of these ingredients to one cup of milk, and you slowly bring it to a boil:

- 1 Tbsp Chopped dates
- 2 tsp Chopped almonds
- 1 Tbsp Coconut meat or flakes
- 1/2 tsp Saffron
- 1-2 tsp Ghee
- 1/2 tsp Cardamom



2. Add ojas-building herbs to the milk (1/8 tsp or one 500mg capsule of each):

- [Shatavari](#) (Strength of 100 Husbands, sometimes spelled Shatawari)
- [Ashwagandha](#) (Strength of Ten Horses, sometimes spelled Ashwaganda)

3. Optional: Once the milk, herbs, foods and spices are cooked and off the flame, add 1 tsp of raw honey.

In the LifeSpa online shop, you'll find these delicious ingredients formulated into an organic, 30-day beverage mix called the [Ojas Nightly Tonic](#).

Summary

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In The Evening

Cultivate Pleasant and Relaxing Activities

Avoid Work that Requires Energy and Concentration

Use Gentle and Soothing Aromatherapy Oils

In Bed

Adjust the Temperature

Avoid Using the Bedroom for Mental Activities

Keep Your Head and Feet Warm

Turn Off Lights and Wi-Fi

Assume A Comfortable Position and Relax

Just Before Bed

Abhyanga (*Daily Self-Massage*)

Drink a Glass of Warm Milk

Avoid Sleeping Pills
(*use Ayurvedic Natural Sleep Aids*)

Melatonin

In the Morning

Wake Up with the Sun
(*take Vitamin D*)

Get Sun On Your Body

Start the day with an Oil Massage, a Shower, Yoga, and Meditation

Disclaimer

A sleep disorder is broadly defined as a physical or psychological problem that impairs your ability to sleep or causes increased sleepiness during the day. Everyone can experience sleep problems from time to time. However, you might have a sleep disorder and should consult your primary healthcare practitioner if:

- You regularly experience difficulty sleeping.
- You are often tired during the day, even if you slept for at least seven hours the night before.
- You have a reduced or impaired ability to perform regular daytime activities.
- Your partner has told you that you snore loudly and sometimes seem to stop breathing.

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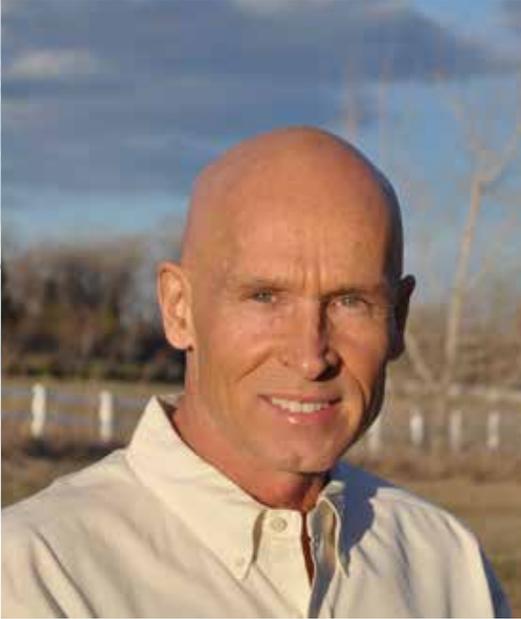
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About John Douillard



Dr. John Douillard, DC, CAP, is a globally recognized influencer in the fields of natural health, Ayurveda, and sports medicine. He is the creator of LifeSpa.com, the leading Ayurvedic health and wellness resource on the web.

LifeSpa has grown today to host a booming Ayurvedic clinic and on-site herbal shop, online database containing over 1000 articles and videos proving ancient medicine using modern science, as well as an [online store](#) providing a multitude of Ayurvedic remedies, herbs and supplements.

Dr. John has written and produced numerous health and fitness books, eCourses, programs, and DVDs. He has been teaching and lecturing on Ayurveda internationally for more than 30 years. Dr. John is the former Director of Player Development for the New Jersey Nets NBA team, a repeat guest on the

Dr. Oz show, and featured in Woman's World Magazine, Huffington Post, Yoga Journal and dozens of other publications.

LifeSpa is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains in sunny Boulder, Colorado where Dr. John lives with his wife and where they raised their six children.