

ADHD and Sleep: The Missing Link – Quick Guide



The ADHD-Sleep Cycle: Why It Feels Impossible to Fix

💡 **ADHD and sleep fuel each other.** When sleep is off, ADHD symptoms intensify. When ADHD symptoms intensify, sleep gets worse. This cycle won't break on its own—you need the right approach.



Common Sleep Disruptors for ADHD:

- ✓ **ADHD Second Wind** – Just when you should be getting tired, your brain kicks into high gear.
 - ✓ **Time Blindness** – Losing track of time pushes bedtime later without realizing it.
 - ✓ **Revenge Bedtime Procrastination** – Staying up late to reclaim personal time, even when exhausted.
 - ✓ **Racing Thoughts & Difficulty Shutting Off** – Your brain won't stop long enough for sleep to happen.
 - ✓ **Unstable Energy Levels** → Energy crashes and spikes throughout the day make it harder to regulate sleep.
 - ✓ **Delayed Circadian Rhythm ('ADHD Night Owl Effect')** – Your sleep cycle naturally runs later.
 - ✓ **Inconsistent Sleep-Wake Patterns** – Sleeping at different times confuses your body clock.
 - ✓ **Over-Reliance on 'Catch-Up Sleep'** – Sleeping in on weekends disrupts weekday sleep.
 - ✓ **Morning Brain Fog** – Waking up is a battle, making it harder to get moving.
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ADHD Sleep Strategies That Actually Work

✓ **The Dopamine Sleep Switch** → Sleep feels boring to the ADHD brain—so we don't want to do it. Find a way to make sleep something your brain *wants*, not something it avoids.

? **Ask Yourself:** What makes me resist sleep? What's one way I can make bedtime more engaging without overstimulating myself?

→ **Try:** Audiobooks instead of scrolling, stretching with music, pre-bed dopamine rewards.

✓ **Managing the Racing Mind** → ADHD brains don't "power down"—they latch onto thoughts. Instead of trying to stop thinking, give your brain a new focus.

? **Ask Yourself:** Do I give myself enough time to mentally transition from 'doing' to 'resting'? What's one way I can offload my thoughts before bed?

→**Try:** Brain-dumping (journaling, voice notes), guided distractions (audio stories, sensory grounding).

✓ **Creating an ADHD-Friendly Sleep Setup** → Your environment isn't neutral—it's either helping or hurting how your brain regulates sleep. So, set your space for success.

? **Ask Yourself:** What's one small environmental tweak I can make to support better sleep? What sensory distractions keep me awake the most?

→**Try:** Weighted blankets, blackout curtains, pink noise, fidget tools.

✓ **Energy Management, Not Just Sleep** → Sleep struggles don't start at night. Your energy patterns throughout the day don't just affect your productivity—they determine how easily you sleep at night. The goal isn't just to avoid crashes, but to create a rhythm where sleep naturally follows.

? **Ask Yourself:** Do I experience big energy crashes or spikes throughout the day? How can I create steadier energy patterns so nighttime feels like a natural wind-down? What part of my day feels most draining? Where do I need steadier energy?

→**Try:** Small movement breaks, meal timing, micro-recovery moments.

! What If It's Not Working?

💡 **Struggling despite making changes? Adjust your approach!**

✓ **Can't fall asleep?** Look at what might still be stimulating your brain—too much screen time? Eating too late? Rushing straight from activity to bed?

✓ **Mind still racing?** Your brain might not be getting enough cues to shift into rest mode—are you easing into sleep or expecting it to just "happen"? Do you have a wind-down ritual that actually works for you?

✓ **Waking up exhausted?** Not all sleep is restful sleep—are you waking up at random times? Is your sleep setup actually comfortable? Are you getting enough deep sleep, or just lying in bed for hours?

✓ **Falling asleep fine but waking up in the night?** Something might be disrupting your sleep mid-cycle—stress? Blood sugar dips? Temperature shifts? Could something in your environment (noise, light, discomfort) be waking you up?

✓ **Feeling groggy all morning?** Your brain needs cues to wake up—are you getting sunlight and movement early in the day? Are you jolting yourself awake too fast instead of easing into alertness?

💡 **Remember: Progress isn't linear. Tweak, experiment, and find what works for YOU.**

🌟 Your Sleep Tracking Challenge




Tracking what works (and what doesn't) is key to lasting change. Try this simple system:

- 1 **Pick One Shift Tonight** – Choose one small change to try.
- 2 **Reflect** – Pay attention to what happens. Did this shift make sleep easier or harder? What difference did you notice?
- 3 **Adjust** – Keep what's working, tweak what isn't, and try again.

 **Track Your Progress:** Use a journal, notes app, or voice memos to track patterns and progress.

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💡 **Feeling stuck? Have questions? Reach out anytime.**

You don't have to figure this out alone. If you're feeling stuck or unsure what to try next, reach out—I'm here to help you keep moving forward.