

# Session 3: The Importance of Healthy Sleep



- Check your vitals
- Centering meditation
- Go around
- Home practice review
- Health topic:
  - Sleep
- Mind-body:
  - Introduction to Meditation
- Review home practice assignments for coming week
- Recipe
- Healthy meal

# The Importance of Getting a Good Night of Sleep



Image credit: [www.docakilah.wordpress.com](http://www.docakilah.wordpress.com)

## What is insomnia?

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder where individuals have a challenging time falling asleep, staying asleep, or both.

Insomnia can be **acute**, meaning short-term, or **chronic**, meaning long-term.

- ✓ Acute insomnia can last for a few days or even weeks.
- ✓ Chronic insomnia can last for a month or longer.

Sometimes insomnia can be related to another medical condition, medication, or substance. This is called **secondary insomnia**.

Other times insomnia is its own distinct disorder. Many changing life circumstances can trigger insomnia, such as stress or a traumatic event.

## How does sleep affect my overall health?

The short-term effects of insomnia can include a lack of energy, irritability, lack of motivation, and trouble focusing. There are many long-term effects of insomnia, including anxiety disorders, depression, suppressed immune function, stress in the stomach and intestines, headaches, and weight gain.



## What are some ways that I can establish healthy sleep patterns?

- ❖ **Exercise is great**, but not too late in the day. Try to exercise at least 20- 30 minutes on most days. Exercising too close to our bed times can make it harder to relax and transition into sleep.
- ❖ **Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day.** If possible, wake up with the sun or use very bright lights in the morning. Sleep experts recommend that, if you have problems falling asleep, you should get an hour of exposure to morning sunlight and turn down the lights before bedtime.
- ❖ **Focus on foods and beverages that promote sleep.** Chamomile tea, warm milk, bananas, soy, whole grain cereal, apples, almonds, and walnuts are all great choices. Try to consume these beneficial snacks *at least 1 hour before bed* so that the body has time to absorb the sleep promoting nutrients. Alcohol does not help us sleep better.
- ❖ **Take a supplement to help support healthy sleep.** Taking a melatonin supplement (0.5-3 mg) one hour before bedtime.
- ❖ **Be mindful of caffeine.** Caffeine is in coffee, colas, certain teas, and chocolate, and its effects can take as long as 8 hours to wear off fully. Therefore, a cup of coffee in the late afternoon can make it hard for you to fall asleep at night.
- ❖ **Be mindful of nicotine.** Nicotine is also a stimulant, often causing smokers to sleep only very lightly. In addition, smokers often wake up too early in the morning because of nicotine withdrawal.
- ❖ **Avoid large meals and beverages late at night.**
- ❖ Some commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure, or asthma medications, as well as some over-the-counter and herbal remedies for coughs, colds, or allergies, can disrupt sleep patterns. If you have trouble sleeping, **talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see whether any drugs you're taking might be contributing to your trouble sleeping** and ask whether they can be taken at other times during the day or early in the evening.

- ❖ **Try to find a sleep schedule that works for you.** Getting into a rhythm of going to bed and waking up at the same time each day can be very helpful for training your body to sleep well.
- ❖ **Find ways to relax before bed.** Try not to overschedule your day so that you can set aside time to unwind. A relaxing activity, such as reading, journaling, taking a bath, or listening to music, is a wonderful addition to your bedtime ritual.
- ❖ **Have an inviting sleeping space.** Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, such as noises, bright lights, an uncomfortable bed, or warm temperatures. You sleep better if the temperature in the room is kept on the cool side. A TV, cell phone, or computer in the bedroom can be a distraction and keep you from getting enough sleep. Turn the clock's face out of view so you don't worry about the time while trying to fall asleep.
- ❖ **Try a body scan or seated meditation.** If you find yourself still awake after staying in bed for more than 20 minutes or if you are starting to feel anxious or worried, get up and do some relaxing activity, like deep breathing, a body scan, or seated meditation, until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.
- ❖ **Promote Positive Thoughts.** Once sleep becomes a problem negative thoughts will quickly follow. These thoughts often come to mind automatically, but usually they are not *completely* true. Despite that fact, they still trigger the stress response, (also called "fight or flight") and worsen insomnia.

The good news is that the opposite is also true. Positive thoughts can lead to positive changes in the mind and body. This is one of the principals behind a very successful type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Psychology.

**Step 1:** Identify Negative Sleep Thoughts--Write them down. Use the journal on the website.

**Step 2:** Assess any distortions; is there another way of looking at the situation?

**Step 3:** Reframe the negative statements in a more positive way.

Sources: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/inso/>  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/why.html>  
[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy\\_sleep.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf)

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## Gratitude Journaling: Promoting Positive Thoughts

*Research has shown that people who write about things that they are grateful about actually become HAPPIER even over the course of just a few weeks.*



- **Keep your journal in a place where you will see it at the end of each day**
- Try and write about at least **three experiences** each time. This is regular, simple and do-able. However, go for **depth over breadth**. Even if you just focus on one thing, go into detail about why the experience made you grateful.
- Another option is to **express yourself through drawing, painting, creating a collage**, or any way that feels like the best fit for you.
- **Experiment with the types of things you write about.** You can do obvious things ("I am grateful for my children") or more subtle things ("I am grateful that it stopped raining when I stepped outside") but try to do both.
- Remember that all gratitude doesn't need to be saved for the journal. **Tell the people- both loved ones and strangers- in your life how much you appreciate them.**
- **Get personal.** Research shows that focusing on *people* to whom you are grateful has more of an impact than focusing on *things* for which you are grateful.
- **Savor surprises.** Try to record events that were unexpected or surprising, as these tend to bring about stronger levels of gratitude.

Adapted from: [http://stress.about.com/od/positiveattitude/ht/gratitude\\_journ.htm](http://stress.about.com/od/positiveattitude/ht/gratitude_journ.htm)  
[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips\\_for\\_keeping\\_a\\_gratitude\\_journal](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips_for_keeping_a_gratitude_journal)

# Home Practice: Session 3



## **MIND-BODY PRACTICE**

- Practice the body scan 6 out of 7 days
  - OWL audio: body scan
- Practice meditation 6 out of 7 days
  - OWL audio: meditation

## **DAILY LIFE PRACTICE**

- Write down 3 things that you are grateful for in the Journal
- Pick out a food label to bring for the next session
- Pack comfortable clothing for yoga next session
- Bring mindfulness to your routine activities. Try brushing your teeth, washing dishes, taking a shower, driving, and eating mindfully

## **MANUAL ACTIVITY**

- Fill out the Pleasant Events Chart

## **HEALTH TOPIC VIDEO**

- The Importance of Healthy Sleep

## Pleasant Events Chart

Date	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Situation							
Body Experience							
Emotions							
Thoughts							

# White Bean and Spinach Salad

Serves 4

Combining foods high in vitamin C and iron can increase absorption of iron, creating a major energy boost!

## Ingredients:

### Salad

- 2, 15-ounce can of no-salt-added white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- (**Tip:** soaking sliced onions in a bowl of cold water for 15 minutes or more can take away the bitter flavor)
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 4 cups fresh spinach leaves, tough stems removed and torn into bite-sized pieces



Image credit: [www.wholefoodsmarket.com](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com)

### Dressing

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon balsamic or apple cider vinegar, or lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Black pepper and any desired herbs, to taste

## Instructions:

1. In a large mixing bowl combine beans, sliced onion, bell pepper and spinach.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together mustard, vinegar and black pepper. Pour dressing over the bean mixture and stir to combine all ingredients.
3. Serve immediately or chill until ready to use.

## Health Benefits:

- ✓ Spinach and beans are both very high in iron, a mineral that plays a crucial role in good health. Iron deficiencies are very common, and one symptom is restless leg syndrome, which can disrupt sleep patterns.
- ✓ Combining foods high in vitamin C, such as bell peppers, and foods high in iron, such as white beans, can increase the absorption of iron into your blood stream up to 5 times faster.