

CHECKLIST

RESET YOUR
CIRCADIAN
RHYTHM



RESET YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

This checklist provides actionable steps to optimize your internal body clock for better sleep, consistent energy, and improved health. Aligning your daily activities with your natural circadian rhythm creates a foundation for quality sleep and overall wellbeing.

Checklist

1. Morning Light Exposure

- Get morning sunlight within one hour of waking**

This anchors your circadian rhythm by signaling to your brain that it's daytime, helping to regulate melatonin and cortisol production for the entire day.

- Position yourself near a bright window during mid-morning**

Working near natural light ($\geq 1,000$ lux) reinforces your body's daytime alertness signals and maintains proper circadian alignment.

- Take a brief outdoor break during lunch**

This "booster shot" of daylight helps maintain proper rhythm throughout the day and prevents afternoon energy dips.

2. Evening Light Management

- Dim household lights 2-3 hours before bedtime**

Reducing lighting to approximately 50 lux helps signal to your brain that evening has arrived, supporting natural melatonin production.

- Wear amber/blue-blocking glasses after 8 PM**

These glasses filter out blue wavelengths that most strongly suppress melatonin, allowing your brain to prepare for sleep even if you must use screens.

- Use screen filters or activate night mode on devices**

Reducing blue light emission from screens helps prevent circadian disruption when evening device use is unavoidable.

- Eliminate or cover persistent LEDs in the bedroom**

Even small light sources can disrupt melatonin production and fragment sleep quality.

3. Consistent Timing

- Wake up at the same time every day (including weekends)**

A consistent wake time anchors your circadian rhythm more effectively than a fixed bedtime and prevents "social jet lag."

- Establish a consistent eating window of 8-10 hours**

Time-restricted eating that aligns with daylight helps synchronize peripheral clocks in your digestive system with your master clock.

Eat your largest meal before 8 PM

Consuming more than half your daily calories after 8 PM can delay your circadian rhythm by approximately 2 hours.

Track your natural energy patterns for 7 days

Recording your natural alertness, hunger, and sleepiness helps identify your chronotype (early bird, night owl, or in-between) for better schedule alignment.

4. Strategic Physical Activity

Complete vigorous exercise at least 3 hours before bedtime

High-intensity workouts raise core body temperature and stress hormones, which need time to return to baseline before sleep.

Schedule afternoon exercise between 3-7 PM when possible

This timing helps build sleep pressure through adenosine accumulation while still allowing enough time for your body to cool down.

Incorporate gentle movement (like walking) after dinner

Light activity aids digestion without raising core temperature significantly, supporting the natural evening wind-down process.

Practice relaxing stretches or gentle yoga before bed

These activities trigger a "parasympathetic rebound," helping your nervous system shift into rest-and-digest mode for better sleep onset.

5. Environmental Support

- Set bedroom temperature between 60-67°F (16-19°C)**
This temperature range supports the natural drop in core body temperature needed for deep sleep initiation and maintenance.
- Maintain bedroom humidity between 40-60%**
Optimal humidity keeps airways comfortable and prevents both dryness and excess moisture that can disrupt breathing during sleep.
- Create cross-ventilation or use an air purifier in the bedroom**
Good air quality prevents CO₂ buildup and removes allergens that might disturb sleep quality throughout the night.
- Adjust your sleep environment seasonally**
As daylight hours change throughout the year, make corresponding adjustments to lighting, temperature, and activity timing to maintain circadian alignment.