



Sleep Well,  
Live Well

**Chapter 4, Lesson 1:** Sleep Disrupters

There are many things that can prevent you from getting a good night's sleep.

Sleep disrupters—as the name implies—interfere with your sleep quality and quantity. Although you're not fully aware of what occurs while sleeping, anything that could trigger one of your senses can cause disruptions to your sleep. This week you'll learn about common sleep disrupters and what you can do to eliminate or modify them. You'll also read about sleep-friendly foods!

## Sleep Disrupters

Some of these sleep disrupters may be familiar from previous chapters, but they are helpful to review again to understand their impact, especially if you experience several of them simultaneously.

### Light

It is ideal to sleep in a bedroom that is completely or mostly dark. Keep your room dark by:

- Closing your blinds or curtains
- Using night lights that do not produce a lot of light, or plug them in an area that will not directly cast light on your bed.
- Turning off the TV, lights and light-emitting devices (cell phone!) before falling asleep.

### Noise

Loud or sudden noises can wake you up easily. Reduce this sleep disrupter by:

- Wearing ear plugs
- Turning on a fan
- Using a white noise machine

### Temperature

If your bedroom is too warm or too cold, it can wake you up. Find your perfect temperature and maintain it.

- Avoid sleeping in pajamas that are too warm.
- Be sure your blankets are an appropriate weight to prevent being too warm or too cold.

### Bed

Make sure your bed is comfortable, inviting and clean. It can be difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep in an uncomfortable, messy bed.

- Make your bed each day when you wake up.
- Try to wash your sheets weekly.
- Refer back to Chapter 3 for tips to pick the perfect pillows, mattress and sheets.

### Bedroom

A cluttered and unclean bedroom can affect your sleep quality.

- Make it a habit to keep your room tidy.
- Dust your room or use an air purifier to eliminate allergens and irritants.
- Vacuum or sweep to keep the floors clean.

### Partner

Your bedmate can make it difficult to fall asleep, especially if their sleep hygiene is different from yours.

- Compromise: If your partner likes to read before bed, set a cutoff time or ask them to read in another room.
- Do you sleep with a blanket hog? Try using separate blankets.
- Do you like to go to bed earlier than your partner? If so, it is okay to keep separate bedtimes. Just ask your partner to be quiet when they come to bed so you can sleep undisturbed.

### Pets

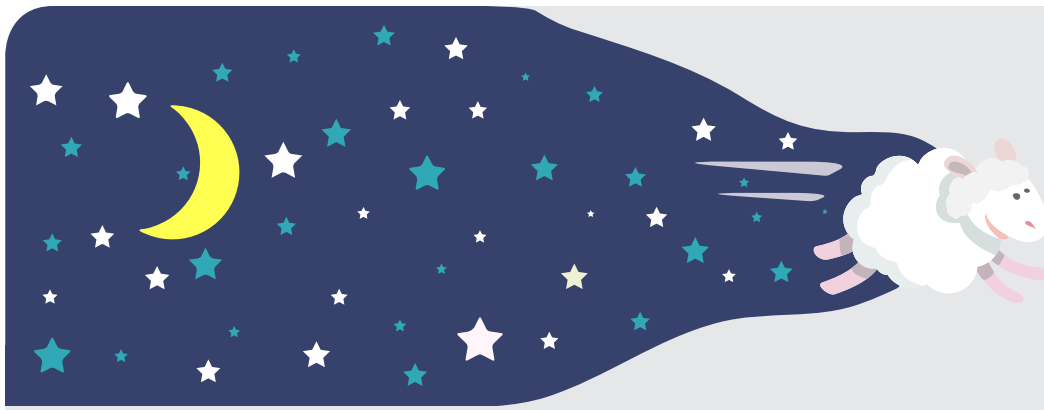
Although they're cute and cuddly, for some people, pets can be a disruption in the bedroom.

- If you find your furry friend disrupts your sleep, you may want to provide them with a bed in another room and close your door.
- Find them whining at your door or banging to get in? Try to set them up in another area of your house to prevent them from waking you up.

### Stress

This can be a major sleep disrupter, so we dedicated a whole chapter to it. You'll learn more in Chapter 5.





## Food

Eating too close to bedtime can cause disruptions in your sleep, primarily if you have indigestion. If you wake up at night with your esophagus burning, you may want to try these ideas to sleep better:

- Do not eat within 4 hours of bedtime.
- Avoid eating foods that trigger your indigestion before bed.
- Sleep propped up to keep the acid from creeping up your throat.
- Try drinking a glass of milk before bed.

## Caffeine

For some people caffeine before bed is no problem; for others, it can cause a restless night. Caffeine is considered to be a stimulant, which is why it keeps you up. If you have trouble with caffeine before bed:

- Avoid caffeinated beverages like soda, coffee or tea.
- Reduce your consumption of foods with caffeine such as chocolate.
- Be aware that it takes 8 hours for your body to fully process 8 ounces of coffee from your body.

## Alcohol

As you learned in Chapter 2, alcohol may help you fall asleep, but will prevent you from getting the deep sleep required for restorative rest because it disrupts your sleep cycle. You can prevent this by:

- Avoid drinking before bed.
- If you do enjoy a nightcap, consume it with enough time for the alcohol to leave your system before bed. Alcohol leaves your body at 1 drink per hour.
- Drink moderately when you do drink. Moderate drinking is defined as two drinks per day for men, and one drink per day for women.

## TV/Technology

As you learned in Chapter 3, technology is a major sleep disrupter. It disrupts sleep because it produces light and sound, stimulates your brain, and prevents you from winding down for sleep. Avoid this by:

- Making your bedroom a technology-free zone.
- If you use your cell phone as an alarm clock, keep it in airplane mode to avoid getting calls, texts, alerts or updates.
- Set yourself a technology curfew beginning at least 1 hour before bed.

## Next Steps

- ★ **Complete Lesson 2:**  
Sleep Disrupter Analysis
- ★ **Complete Lesson 3:**  
12 Foods to Help You Sleep Better
- ★ **Take Chapter 4 Quiz**