

rest easy

Try a natural solution for insomnia.

Americans annually spend more than \$3.5 billion on prescription sleep medications.

Though pills may be tempting if you're one of the 56 percent of insomnia sufferers, Michael Breus, a clinical psychologist and the author of *Beauty Sleep*, says there are plenty of natural methods to try first.

SLEEP FORMULA Essential oils of lavender, chamomile, ylang-ylang, and vanilla help the brain regulate the stress hormone cortisol. In a spray bottle, mix a few drops of essential oil with filtered water. Spray on your pillowcase.

RUB YOUR FEET Spend 10 minutes before bedtime massaging pressure points on the inside and outside of your heels. They can "take your consciousness into your body to relax," says yoga therapist Jnani Chapman.



CARBO LOAD Four hours before bedtime, eat foods that are high in dietary sugars, such as rice cakes or potatoes. These foods contain tryptophan, which triggers the sleep hormones serotonin and melatonin.

THINK POSITIVE When you can't sleep, write down negative thoughts. Keep a list of positive alternatives. When a negative thought appears, repeat an alternative. HEATHER BOERNER

For a sleep-inducing breathing practice, go to yogajournal.com/insomnia.

deep slumber

When you can't sleep, yoga helps.

"Yoga can be a tremendous ally in battling insomnia," says Roger Cole, an Iyengar Yoga teacher and noted sleep research scientist. Like any other vigorous exercise that heats your body, a strong yoga practice earlier in the day—try to finish at least three hours before bedtime—will help you sleep later on. You can also use the relaxing sequence pictured here just before climbing into bed. Hold Downward Dog for 1 or 2 minutes, and each of the other poses from 5 to 15 minutes.

"These poses reduce the activity of your brain's wakefulness centers and your sympathetic nervous system's response to stress—the 'fight or flight' response—and increase the activity of your sleep centers and parasympathetic system—the 'rest and digest' circuit," Cole says. TODD JONES



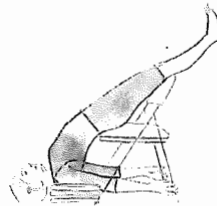
Sukhasana
(Easy Pose)



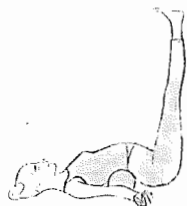
Adho Mukha Svanasana
(Downward-Facing Dog Pose), supported



Paschimottasana
(Seated Forward Bend), supported



Sarvangasana
(Shoulderstand), supported



Viparita Karani
(Legs-up-the-Wall Pose)



Setu Bandha Sarvangasana
(Bridge Pose), supported

PHOTO: SARAH KEHOE; MODEL: TANYA EGGERS; STYLIST: LEIGH NOE; HAIR/MAKEUP: MELISSA ELLIOTT/KOKO REPRESENTS; ILLUSTRATIONS: DONNA GRETHEN

tired? wired?

After a stressful day, yoga brings your body and mind back into balance.

We've all been there at the end of a long day: too exhausted to do anything substantial but too hyped up and jittery to really relax. Feeling simultaneously tired and wired happens more often than many of us would like, and it can be hard to know what kind of practice is best to do when you feel this way.

"The goal of yoga, among other things, is unification of body and mind," says Frank Jude Boccio, a yoga and meditation teacher. But when your body is tired and your mind is wired, he says, you don't experience that unification. "The beauty of it is that yoga practices are specifically designed to bring the two into balance."

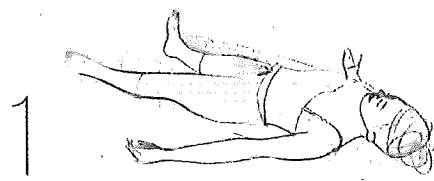
According to Boccio, the first step is to rest the body. Even if your job is not physically rigorous, he says, your body is tired at the end of the day because the mind uses a lot of glucose, which leaves you feeling depleted.

Boccio recommends this short series of restorative postures that combines forward folds to calm the nervous system

and simple twists to revitalize the body and move stagnant blood, rebalancing your energy.

Once your body starts to relax, Boccio says, you can bring your mind into balance with it by doing a simple breath-awareness practice. Start by exhaling completely, with long and steady breaths, as if the receding waves are drawing with them the accumulated detritus of the day; then take deep inhalations that feel like waves coming in with great force. Finally, beware of how much you reactivate the mind with television or computer time before going to bed. If you don't get enough sleep, you start the day feeling depleted, and end it feeling even more so.

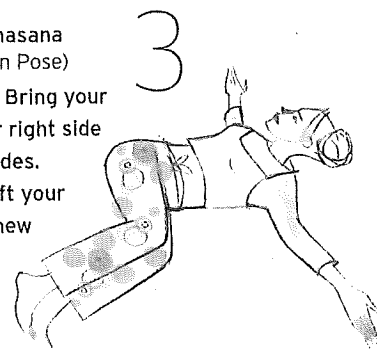
To unwind just before going to sleep, Boccio suggests giving yourself a foot massage: Coat the sole of your foot with raw sesame oil (you can add a few drops of a calming essential oil like lavender), and massage for a few minutes. This brings the energy down in the body, helping you feel grounded before bed. **KAREN MACKLIN**



1
Savasana (Corpse Pose)
Begin by feeling the support of the earth beneath you. Mentally scan your body and notice your level of fatigue or overstimulation. As you move through the following sequence, hold each pose as long as feels right to you.



2
Apanasana (Knees-to-Chest Pose)
Bring one knee into your chest, keeping the other leg straight on the ground. Switch knees, and then bring both knees into your chest. This pose helps release the kidney area, where fatigue is often felt.



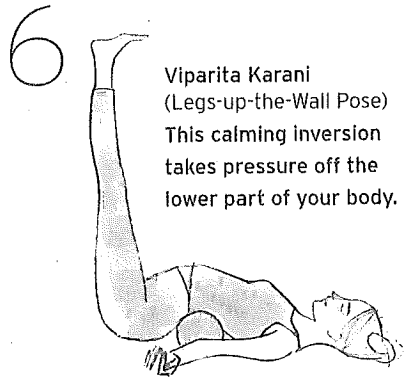
3
Jathara Parivartanasana (Revolved Abdomen Pose)
Extend your arms. Bring your knees over to your right side and hold; switch sides. Twists like these lift your energy and bring new blood to your internal organs and kidney area.



4
Janu Sirsasana (Head-of-the-Knee Pose)
Come into the pose and hold; then switch sides. This forward bend helps calm the nervous system.



5
Seated Twist
Take a gentle twist to either side to help lift lethargy and increase energy.



6
Viparita Karani (Legs-up-the-Wall Pose)
This calming inversion takes pressure off the lower part of your body.