

THE CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING NETWORK

PROTECT  
*your*  
SLEEP!

Five Ways to a Great Night's Rest

GORDON ROBERTSON

**Protect your sleep now.**

**Start getting the sleep you need tonight!**

THE CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING NETWORK



PROTECT  
*your*  
SLEEP!

**Five Ways to a Great Night's Rest**

**GORDON ROBERTSON**

A Special Presentation of  
The Christian Broadcasting Network

*Note: Before beginning any new health regimen, it is important to consult your family physician or healthcare professional first. The information given in this publication is for your consideration. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Before starting or stopping any exercise routine or nutritional supplementation, please consult your family physician or healthcare professional about any contraindications that would make doing so inadvisable.*

*This information is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. The reader should regularly consult a physician in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.*

**The opinions presented here on *The 700 Club* do not necessarily represent the views of CBN.**

**Copyright ©2018 The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc.  
977 Centerville Turnpike, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23463  
CBN's 24-Hour Prayer Center: 800-700-7000  
CBN.com**

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture is also taken from the New King James Version<sup>®</sup>. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	5
CHAPTER ONE	
Overcoming Insomnia .....	7
CHAPTER TWO	
Eat for a Good Night's Sleep .....	12
CHAPTER THREE	
Sleep Apnea Takes Your Breath Away .....	18
CHAPTER FOUR	
When Pain Keeps You Awake .....	22
CHAPTER FIVE	
Fix Your Broken Sleep .....	28



## Introduction

**Learn the keys to more restful sleep from five leading experts in the fields of sleep science, education, clinical psychology, and neurology. CBN's *Protect Your Sleep* brings together the latest research to improve your quality of life and help you stay healthy.**

**Dr. Michael Breus** is a clinical psychologist and sleep expert who shares tips on his website, [thesleepdoctor.com](http://thesleepdoctor.com), and in his best-selling books, *The Power of When* and *The Sleep Doctor's Diet Plan*. On his weekly Facebook Live program, *Wake Up Wednesday*, Dr. Breus answers people's questions about sleep, so they can live fully awake lives.

**Dr. Josh Axe** is on a mission. Every day, through [DrAxe.com](http://DrAxe.com) and his YouTube channel, he shares all-natural solutions to help people live healthier lives.

**Dr. J. Catesby Ware** is a sleep specialist and professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School. He has been studying sleep for over 45 years—and he believes our bodies give us clues regarding sleep disorders.

**Sue Hitzmann**, *New York Times* best-selling author and creator of The MELT Method<sup>®</sup>, is no stranger to chronic pain. She's lived it. While rising to the top of a promising fitness career, she experienced a "little ache" that turned her world upside down.

**Dr. Chris Winter** is a board-certified neurologist and sleep specialist. For over 20 years, he has treated people from every profession, from truck drivers to professional athletes. In his best-selling book, *The Sleep Solution: Why Your Sleep Is Broken and How to Fix It*, he offers solutions to help you get the sleep you need.



## CHAPTER ONE

# Overcoming Insomnia

*You go to bed, but you can't fall asleep. Maybe you wake up in the middle of the night and stare at the ceiling. In the morning you lie in bed tired, worn out, and not ready to face the day. You're not alone. Insomnia disrupts the sleep of millions of people, but you don't have to lose another night of rest.*

### **What's Keeping You Up at Night?**

Dr. Michael Breus is passionate about sleep. He is a clinical psychologist and sleep expert who shares his expertise on his website, [thesleepdoctor.com](http://thesleepdoctor.com), and in his best-selling books. On his weekly Facebook Live program, *Wake Up Wednesday*, Dr. Breus answers people's questions about sleep, so they can live fully awake lives.

“Insomnia affects every racial profile, every gender, every socio-economic status,” Dr. Breus explains. “It doesn't matter. Insomnia is an equal opportunity disorder.”

### **What Puts You to Sleep?**

According to the doctor, sleep sounds more complicated than it really is. He boils it down to two systems in your brain. “The first one is adenosine, which is your ‘sleep drive.’ The second is what we call your ‘sleep rhythm.’ This is a circadian rhythm—or an internal biological clock—that actually tells your body when to sleep.” The chemical adenosine, combined with your biological clock, sends you off to sleep. But, Dr. Breus notes,



“when your drive is high and your circadian rhythm is synched, you sleep. But if either one of those is off, that’s when you could have a sleep disorder.”

This vicious cycle of not sleeping can go from a couple of nights to months on end. When it happens, life can be a struggle just to get out of bed. The crippling effects of chronic insomnia can touch every area of your life.

### **Effects of Sleeplessness**

If you have insomnia and you don’t do anything about it, you could be in store for heightened levels of anxiety and depression. Reaction time slows down. Thinking time is slower. If you are experiencing fatigue, hopelessness, and if you are irritable or sad—and these feelings don’t go away—then you could be slipping into major depression. An underlying health problem could be the cause.

### **It’s Time to Get Some Help**

The first step is to partner with your doctor. Pain may be the cause of your insomnia. Lower back pain, leg pain, or muscle cramps can wake you up and make it hard to fall asleep. Also, certain medical disorders can cause insomnia. Dr. Breus cites hyperthyroidism and Hashimoto’s hypothyroidism as possible sleep robbers. He says that when your thyroid hormone levels go up and down, or remain high, “that can cause a big generation of cortisol, which makes it very difficult to fall asleep.”

### **Consider a Bedroom Makeover**

The next step is to look at where you sleep. Is your

bedroom sleep friendly? If your bedroom has been invaded by sleep distractions, it's time for an extreme bedroom makeover. The solution could be as simple as a new pillow or mattress. "I can't count the number of people where I just got them to get a new pillow and mattress, and it saved the day as far as sleep was concerned," Dr. Breus expressed. He also addresses the importance of your five senses in your sleep in creating a sleep-friendly environment:

**Sight** – Install dimmer switches in your bedroom lighting. Dim those lights about an hour before bedtime. Also, because blue light causes our bodies to be alert, the color of light can be a problem—throwing your biological clock out of sync. Choose light bulbs with special filters to reduce the blue light, so your bedside table isn't telling your brain it's morning.

**Sound** – Lullabies aren't just for babies. Soothing music before bedtime has been shown to help people fall asleep faster. And it's not just music. Sounds of nature can help, too. A little background noise can be a good thing, such as "white noise" from a sound machine or recorded sounds from the forest or ocean.

**Touch** – Dr. Breus stresses the importance of "sleep equipment" such as pillows, mattresses, comforters and sheets. Most important, he says, "If you haven't changed your mattress in ... six or seven years, there's a very high likelihood that you need to."

**Smell** – Researchers at Rockefeller University and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute estimate the average human being has the ability to distinguish one trillion

different odors. So, getting good sleep includes experiencing the right scents. Aromatherapy promotes a relaxation response in your body. For example, lavender and ylang ylang pillow sprays have been shown to help people fall asleep.

**Taste** – When we eat and when we go to bed are important. If your stomach is still digesting dinner, it could keep you up at night. Your body was meant to digest food standing up or sitting—not lying down. If your doctor says it’s appropriate, give your body three or four hours for digestion to help you get a good night’s rest.

### **Wind Down Before Bedtime**

As you end your day, you need to prepare your body for bed with a solid rest routine. For example, if you plan on turning in by 11 p.m., set an alarm clock in your bedroom for 10 p.m. so you have to physically walk into the room to turn it off.

Also, divide the hour before bedtime into 20-minute segments. Take the first 20 minutes to do what your family normally does before bed. “In our house,” Dr. Breus shares, “we’re getting the kids’ backpacks together, finding shoes . . . and all the crazy stuff that goes on in our household.”

Next, take 20 minutes for hygiene, like a hot bath or shower. After changing into your bed clothes, spend the last 20 minutes relaxing and thanking God for all He has done for you. That last 20 minutes just before lights out is a great time for personal prayer and Scripture reading to help end your day on a good note.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Eat for a Good Night's Sleep

*The signs are all around us. It's the man at the traffic light yawning. It's the woman in a meeting at work, fighting to keep her eyes open. And maybe it's you. Over 60 million Americans suffer from a sleep disorder. What might surprise you is some of the answers to your sleep problems aren't just in the bedroom. They're in your kitchen, too.*

Dr. Josh Axe is on a mission. Every day, through DrAxe.com and his YouTube channel, he shares all-natural solutions to help people live healthier lives. He sees the high price people are paying because of stress. And Dr. Axe wants to change that. First, he points out the tell-tale warning signs of sleep loss. If someone is cranky, or they have bags under their eyes, or if their posture is rounded and slouched, chances are they are sleepy.

#### **Stress Keeps You Awake**

“We are in traffic jams. We're stressed at work ... and stressed in the family,” says Dr. Axe. “A lot of us have these really high levels of cortisol due to all of these stressors ... and that's a really big part of why people aren't getting enough sleep.” (See explanation of cortisol in chapter one.)

#### **Too Much Light!**

Our bodies aren't built for the pace of life that technology has brought us. It probably started when Thomas Edison introduced electric lights to streets and

homes, and people have been losing sleep ever since. We are overexposed to light by our “always on” lifestyles. The result is our bodies aren’t getting the restorative sleep they need. Dr. Axe explains why: “People had candlelight—that’s a natural orange light that your brain doesn’t react to as well, and you get sleepy. You know, our ancestors, they would go to bed an hour or two after the sun went down and wake up at sunrise. So, they got plenty of sleep.”

### **Sleep Rests, Restores, Repairs Our Bodies**

We are designed to work best when given enough time to rest and restore. When you’re sleeping and you’re not having to process food and deal with stressful thoughts and bright lights, that’s the time your body is best able to repair, recover and heal itself.

### **Sleep Starts in Your Kitchen**

You can give yourself a head start to a good night’s sleep. Surprisingly, it begins with overhauling your kitchen. Take some time to get rid of all the foods draining you of sleep—and replace them with foods that will charge up your life.

“Stay away from sugar, refined grains, artificial sweeteners, hydrogenated oils, and any packaged processed foods,” warns Dr. Axe. Not only will these foods rob you of sleep, they’ve also been linked to chronic illnesses such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer. So, if it comes in a package and has a list of ingredients a mile long, stay away!

## **Add These Foods to Your Shopping List:**

- **Herbs.**
- **Vegetables.**
- **Berries** contain antioxidants and certain types of carbohydrates that help create a healthy night's sleep.
- **Nuts and seeds**, such as walnuts, chia and flaxseed.
- **Whole, sprouted ancient grains**, including rice, oats and quinoa.
- **Healthy fats**, such as avocados, coconut, and wild-caught salmon. Along with nuts and seeds, these foods are great for regulating hormones in your body.
- **Turmeric** is fantastic. There are more clinical and medical studies on turmeric, proving its overall health benefits for reducing inflammation and supporting the brain and the gut.
- **Ginger** is known for its anti-inflammatory properties, and for being one of the ultimate herbs for supporting your digestive system.
- **Chicken soup.** You might have heard that chicken soup is good for the soul. It's also great for your health. A study by the University of Nebraska Medical Center found that chicken broth helps boost your immune system. It also supports respiratory and digestive health. And that means more restorative sleep.

- **Bone broth** is high in collagen, which benefits your skin, hair, nails, joints, immune system, gut, and digestive health. Also, the amino acids in bone broth support your body's sleep cycles, partly because of how they support your gut and your neurological health.
- **Kale.** This superfood is loaded with magnesium, which helps fight insomnia by calming your nervous system.
- **Dark chocolate.** Reward yourself—because it's high in magnesium, too!

### **Re-Think Breakfast**

If you can't change your whole diet, just change breakfast. Think of it this way: if you just change your breakfast, you're changing 33 percent of your diet. Wake up in the morning and make a super food smoothie by adding one scoop of collagen protein—or a bone broth powder that's high in protein—to coconut or almond milk. Add a cup of berries and a little bit of cinnamon. That's a super breakfast smoothie!

### **Eye-Opening Coffee Facts**

Limit the amount of coffee you drink during the day. If you don't, you are sabotaging your sleep. If you have coffee after three o'clock in the afternoon, or at night, even if you do fall asleep, that late-day caffeine will keep cortisol levels higher and will affect your sleep cycle.



## **Move Your Body**

If you want to sleep like a baby at night, then you need to move your body during the day. Exercise is an important part of your health, and it primes your body for sleep. Dr. Axe explains it this way: “If we don’t move at all during the day, and we’re not working out at all, our body ... says to itself, ‘Well, I didn’t do much today, so my sleep tonight isn’t as crucial.’” So exercise! Whether you go to the gym, lift weights, use the treadmill, or you go for a 20-minute walk outside, that will get your body set for a great night’s sleep.

## **Your Bedtime Checklist:**

As your day comes to an end, be sure your bedroom is a sanctuary for sleep. Here’s a list to help create the perfect sleep environment:

- Keep it clean and quiet.
- Get rid of all electronic devices—including the TV.
- Use a bed that is not too firm and not too soft.
- Set the temperature below 70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Use an essential oil diffuser. Essential oils are referenced more than 300 times in the Bible. Dr. Axe recommends his three favorite essential oils for a better night’s sleep: lavender, Roman chamomile and holy basil.

**Don’t lose another night of sleep. Start making changes to your diet today. Go for a walk outside**



## CHAPTER 3

### Sleep Apnea Takes Your Breath Away

*Millions of Americans stop breathing every night, and they don't even know it's happening. They stop breathing over and over, and they wake up the next morning feeling tired—and more prone to heart attacks and stroke. This pattern of not breathing is called sleep apnea, and it's a real threat to your health and life.*

Dr. J. Catesby Ware is a sleep specialist and professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School. He has studied sleep for over 45 years, and he's discovered that our bodies give us clues regarding sleep disorders.

The word *apnea* means “without breathing” (*a* means “without,” *pnea* refers to “breathing”). According to Dr. Ware, this can be a serious disorder. During an episode of sleep apnea, there is a collapse, or closing, of the upper airway that prevents breathing. Repeated episodes cause a constriction of blood vessels, making the heart work harder. This may cause heart enlargement and may contribute to heart attacks and death.

“If somebody stops breathing five times per hour—so that's 30 or 40 times during that night—that is enough to cause high blood pressure,” Dr. Ware observes. High blood pressure sets the stage for heart disease and stroke. According to the CDC, seven out of ten Americans who have their first heart attack also have high blood pressure.

## **High Blood Pressure Warnings**

Here are a few warning signs that you might have high blood pressure:

- **Severe headaches**
- **Fatigue and confusion**
- **Vision problems**
- **Chest pain**

If you experience any of these signs, see your doctor as soon as possible. It could be that sleep apnea is the cause of the problem.

## **Apnea Events Are Elusive**

Most sleep apnea events average 20 seconds in length. Then you wake up, breathe six times, and fall back to sleep because you're still very sleepy. In those few seconds of being awake enough to breathe six times, it's not enough to register in your memory. So, all you remember is, "I didn't have very restful sleep."

## **Snoring Can Signal Sleep Apnea**

You may not know you snore, but someone else does! Dr. Ware explains: "We have a big army of helpers to identify sleep apnea patients, and they're usually the bed partner. The bed partner notes snoring, maybe some pauses in breathing. So, those are the typical things you look for."

## **80 Percent Don't Know They Have It**

The sad reality is that 80 percent of sleep apnea sufferers go undiagnosed. What's usually seen as a

condition that affects only overweight, middle-aged men is now becoming a growing problem for women, too. Women after menopause have a hormonal change that relaxes the muscles in the upper airway; that, plus weight gain, makes women susceptible to sleep apnea.

### **Ask About a Sleep Study**

If you have any symptoms of sleep apnea, now is the time to talk to your doctor about getting a sleep study. The sooner you discover what's happening while you sleep, the sooner you can get the help you need.

According to Dr. Ware, a sleep study measures many of the same things that are checked during a physical exam during the day—heartbeat, breathing, oxygen level, and muscle tone. “When somebody gets a sleep study, we put sensors on their body to measure those things,” explains Dr. Ware. “Then we look at the sleep the next day by looking at what happened to all those measures. And it's really remarkable that some people can have enormous heartbeat irregularities during sleep, and during the 30 seconds when you listen to it, or less, during the day, it sounds completely normal.”

### **CPAP Is a Breath Saver**

If you are diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea, one of the treatment options is a CPAP machine. CPAP stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. During the night, pressurized air is used to make sure that the airway is kept open to prevent apnea events. When used properly, the benefits can be seen almost immediately. You'll have lower blood pressure and won't feel sleepy during the day.

In addition to CPAP, other new treatments are being developed and used. “For example, we can use an oral appliance which changes the position of the jaw and opens up the airway,” notes Dr. Ware. Some medications can help as well.

## **How to Overcome Sleep Apnea**

The doctor says one of the best ways to reduce the impact of sleep apnea is by making the commitment to live a healthier lifestyle.

Dr. Ware suggests changing your lifestyle to exercise more and eat less. Interestingly, he suggests hanging out with people who don't have a weight problem while you're trying to lose some pounds. “Obesity is contagious in the sense that if you hang out with obese people, you're more likely to be obese,” he says.

None of this is easy, but it's a choice people must make to overcome sleep apnea.

**Don't let sleep apnea rob you of a healthy life. If you are experiencing poor sleep, have high blood pressure, and are overweight, don't ignore the problem. Partner with your doctor and see if you need to get a sleep study. Take charge of your health today and enjoy the gift of life that God has given you.**

*He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath to everyone, life to everyone who walks the earth.* Isaiah 42:5 NLT

## CHAPTER FOUR

### When Pain Keeps You Awake

*Life can be painful. It brings more than its share of stubbed toes, sprained ankles, and broken bones. Yet, millions of people suffer with chronic pain. It's crippling pain that turns life into a daily struggle and robs them of a good night's sleep. According to the National Sleep Foundation, one out of three Americans loses an average of 20 hours of sleep per week because of pain. The good news is you don't have to let pain keep you from enjoying your life any longer.*

Sue Hitzmann is no stranger to chronic pain: “When you are in pain ... your world gets awfully small. People don't realize that as pain becomes chronic, it really alters everything.” Hitzmann is a *New York Times* best-selling author and the creator of “The MELT Method<sup>®</sup>.” But while she was rising to the top of a promising fitness career, Sue experienced a “little ache” that turned her world upside down. “One day I woke up and the bottom of my foot hurt me, and what started out as ... a little ache in my foot turned into almost entire body-wide pain. I really just thought that I had permanently damaged myself.”

#### **Chronic Pain Can Happen to Anyone**

According to the National Institutes of Health, one out of ten Americans experiences chronic pain daily. It affects the lives of more people than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined. And it comes with a big price tag—hundreds of billions of dollars in lost

workplace productivity. Chronic pain has also given rise to the skyrocketing use of prescription drugs to “manage” pain. The numbers suggest we are facing a “pain pill” epidemic. Whether we know it or not, chronic pain is hurting all of us.

As an athlete, Hitzmann had to face this reality, “It can happen to anyone at any age. It doesn’t matter if you’re fit and healthy and eating right. And ... a big wakeup call for a lot of people is even if you do eat right and exercise, it doesn’t mean that you’re not going to walk around with no pain.”

### **The Picture of Pain**

What does chronic pain look like? It could be anything from a nagging backache that won’t stop, to intense migraines. Pain becomes chronic when it continues to last and doesn’t go away. But, before pain turns chronic, there are “warning signs.” A stiff neck in the morning or a sudden lower back pain that comes and goes might be a sign you’re heading for trouble. Don’t ignore it. Pay attention to these “little” aches and pains, and become more aware of what’s going on in your body.

### **Ignored Pain Returns With a Vengeance**

“When we have what we call ‘pre-pain signals’ and you ignore them, like most people do, then you start getting those symptoms that are a little bit more aggressive ... joint stiffness, neck pain, and all those kinds of things,” Hitzmann observes. “And the thing about those types of pains or aches is that they seem so common. People do one of two things: they either take a pain reliever or they ignore it. And that causes more problems.”



## **Pain Steals Your Sleep**

According to the National Sleep Foundation, one out of three Americans loses an average of 20 hours of sleep per week because of pain. If you're not getting the sleep you need, then you're at a greater risk for a long list of diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. There is growing evidence that a lack of sleep could even contribute to Alzheimer's disease.

## **How Stress Accumulates**

Hitzmann describes how sleep loss builds up stress: "When you don't get a restful night's sleep, you wake up the next day with an accumulation of stress, a backlog of 'stuck' stress, that now you're dealing with, day in and day out, and it's just time-over-tension overload. After a while, you are in a state of chronic pain, and nothing you do makes a dent."

Balancing the demands of life can be stressful. If you feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to keep up, then you're not alone. In a recent Gallup poll, 79 percent of Americans reported experiencing stress during their day. Stress and pain are connected. If you don't manage the stress in your life, then you're setting yourself up for a vicious cycle of chronic pain.

According to Hitzmann, most people experience this cycle. "If you're living in that state of stress all the time," she says, "your nervous system kind of thinks that's the balanced place to be. And it just takes one thing to tip you over the edge—and then you're just down and out."

## Here's Hope! Try This Now!

- Slow down and take a moment to relax.
- Go outside and take a walk with a friend.
- Write a gratitude list and thank God for all the good in your life.
- Remember managing your stress is another step toward reducing pain in your life.

## The Body's Pain Connection

Growing research suggests that the source of pain in our bodies is rooted in the connective tissue, also known as *fascia*. This long-ignored flexible network of tissue is found throughout the body. It was once thought that its only role was to act like a sort of “packing material” to help give our bodies form and support. But research indicates that this fluid-filled network of tissue plays an important part in keeping our cells hydrated. There's even the idea that the fascia network might also act as a secondary nervous system. These discoveries are changing our understanding of pain and giving us new ways to treat it.

Hitzmann is using this new research in her pain treatment method. “Connective tissue is truly the stability system of everything—your skin, bones, nerves, organs—every cell in your body relies on this extra cellular matrix to remain stable,” Hitzmann explains. “Think of connective tissue as a fluid-based architectural matrix, like a river. Daily living is laying sediment down in this river.” Hitzmann calls this sediment “cellular dehydration.” What she learned in

her studies radically changed her thinking and helped free her from chronic pain. Today, she helps others find relief through The MELT Method. This self-treatment program focuses on eliminating “stuck stress” and keeping the connective tissues healthy. “If we could all learn how to treat the cause of pain becoming chronic and allow our nervous system to adapt to a new nice environment, I think people would live a more active, healthy, pain-free life, which is what people want, and you can do it,” Hitzmann encourages.

**The Bible tells us how to have renewed strength and rise above pain:**

*But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31 NLT

**Let today be your new beginning. Don't let chronic pain interfere with getting a good night's rest or limit your enjoyment of the life God has given you.**

## NOTES

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Fix Your Broken Sleep

*According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one out of every three Americans isn't getting a healthy night's sleep. What's this "life in the fast lane" costing us? Unfortunately, our health. Take a few minutes to slow down now, and find out how to get the sleep you need. We talked to a doctor who can help.*

Dr. Chris Winter is a board-certified neurologist and sleep specialist. For over 20 years, he has treated people from all walks of life, from truck drivers to professional athletes. The one thing they all have in common is "broken" sleep.

The good news is Dr. Winter believes your sleep can be fixed. In his best-selling book, *The Sleep Solution: Why Your Sleep Is Broken and How to Fix It*, he offers solutions to help you get the sleep you need.

"Only two things cause sleepiness," states Dr. Winter. "You are not spending enough time in bed getting sleep ... or you're spending a lot of time sleeping, but there's something dysfunctional about your sleep."

Sleep problems build up over time. The doctor says, "I've never met someone who said, 'I'm a great sleeper, but three days ago I started having bad sleep, so here I am in your office.'"

Did you know our gadgets can keep us from great sleep? Think about it. From smartphones to big screen TVs, we're surrounded by artificial light from technology. And these electronics have a dark side:

they're robbing us of our sleep.

Adding to the problem is our out-of-control schedule. Many people are trying to juggle long hours at work, and a long list of activities at home. Dr. Winter is quick to pick up on these cues. "People will routinely overstep their bedtime. They're kind of a ticking time bomb when it comes to their sleep."

Fixing your sleep begins with taking an honest look at your habits. Are you up late answering emails or playing a game on your smartphone? Or maybe your schedule is so packed it's impossible to get it all done. If this is you, then it's time to make some changes, or you could be heading for big trouble.

"One of my first questions I usually ask a patient is, 'What time do you go to bed?' I always joke that if it takes a PowerPoint presentation for you to answer that question, there's probably an issue. People who have ... irregular schedules ... they're much more prone to ... chronic conditions, dementing illnesses—and the big thing right now is cancer."

### **Make Sleep Your Priority**

If you want to stay healthy, make sleep a top priority. Start by figuring out how much sleep you need. Determine what time you need to get up in the morning to get to work on time, ready and refreshed. Count back eight hours from when you need to get up. Start with eight hours, but you may find you need a little less or a bit more. Now, track it. Keep a diary of your sleep for at least a month. Record how you feel. Energized? Tired? Optimistic? Keep a record.

## **How Much Do You Need?**

Determining the amount of sleep you need is what's important here. Think about sleep like you would food. When you are hungry, you probably need to eat. If you are feeling tired, then you need to sleep. Getting a great night's sleep starts before you turn off the lights to go to bed. If you want to keep your sleep on track, you need a plan of attack. You need to think like a soldier.

## **The Military Approach**

The military schedule is wonderful. The brain loves to know what's coming. Breakfast every day at 6 a.m., lunch every day at noon, dinner every night at 6 p.m. You exercise first thing in the morning. You don't deviate from the plan. It's friendly to your brain. However, there's always going to be a night when you don't go to bed on time. The important thing is to try to stick to your new schedule. You don't want to slip back into the bad habits that were stealing your sleep in the first place. Too many people give themselves license to sleep in, or take naps when they have difficult nights, which only perpetuates the problem. The wake-up time needs to be set in stone.

## **Fine-Tuning Your Sleep**

Sometimes you'll need more sleep, and other times you'll need less. The amount of sleep you need is connected to your activities and your age. If you notice you're getting sleepy, or you are having trouble going to sleep, then you need to adjust your sleep schedule. For example, Dr. Ware advises athletes that they may need less sleep in the off-season than they do in season.

You might not be a star athlete, but you can face an “off-season” too. Any time your life significantly changes can cause a change in your sleep needs.

Let’s listen in on a conversation between Dr. Ware and a recent retiree:

**Retiree:** I can’t sleep!

Doctor: Well, what time do you go to bed?

**Retiree:** Nine o’clock.

Doctor: What time do you get out of bed?

**Retiree:** Eight o’clock.

Doctor: Do you work?

**Retiree:** No.

Doctor: Do you have kids?

**Retiree:** No.

Doctor: What do you do all day?

**Retiree:** I’m retired.

Doctor: Well, that’s great. You’ve decided that you’re done with your day at nine o’clock, but your brain is not quite ready to sleep. So, I need you to stay up till eleven o’clock.

If this is you, then you need to add more activities to your life. Consider these two ideas:

- **Meet a friend and go for a walk.** Exercise is great for your health and so is being social. Plus, walking with a friend will help you stick to it.
- **Get out and volunteer.** Share your years of experience with others. You might be surprised at how good you feel, and how well you sleep, by adding some extra activity to your routine.



What if you still feel worn out? If you face every day without any energy, it's time to partner with your doctor to discover if sleep is really the issue—and make sure you review any medications you might be taking. “I think it's important for people to understand and be a partner with the doctor and not let the doctor simply lead you,” Dr. Ware advises. For example, he explains the difference between *fatigue* and *sleepiness*. “Fatigue, to me, is body energy, you know? And you talk to people who say, ‘If I walked up a flight of stairs, I am incredibly fatigued.’ That’s a different concept than sleepiness. Sleepiness is ‘how driven are you to sleep?’”

Dr. Ware is optimistic about fixing your broken sleep. “One of the things I love about sleep as a neurologist is we can really help people.” He adds, “If you’re not a great sleeper, you can do things to make yourself a great sleeper. If you’re already a pretty good sleeper you can enhance your sleep and be even better.”

**Your broken sleep can be fixed. Take charge of your sleep today. Start by finding out how much you need. Get up at the same time every morning. And stick to a schedule during the day. Rest is a gift from God. Let’s make sure we’re doing all we can to enjoy the rest that God provides.**

*“For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.”* Jeremiah 31:25 NLT

**When you get the sleep you need, you’ll have the energy you need to live a full and vibrant life.**











977 Centerville Turnpike  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23463  
CBN's 24-Hour Prayer Center: 800-700-7000  
CBN.com