

the sleep trials

Rethink your REGIME or get busy with essential oils – which trial got our beauty team more ZZZs?



Trial 1: Routine re-jig

Beauty editor Malena Harbers

MALENA'S SLEEP ISSUE:
"I can't drop off until 2am"

MONDAY
Timing is everything

Five years ago I went through a life-changing break-up that messed up my sleeping patterns. Since then, no matter how tired I am, the moment my head hits the pillow I slip into playback mode, mentally reviewing all the events of the day. So, after another Sunday night of hours spent listening to a German-language course in order to will myself to sleep (the repetitive voice on the track has become my Ambien), I'm keen to try out a natural method of conquering my sleep crisis.

The trick, I'm told by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, is to wake up and go to bed at the same time every day. We all have our own master clock, and by forcing it to slip into this daily rhythm our bodies can balance hormones properly while we're asleep, ensuring a better slumber. Apparently, the right room temperature (slightly cool at 16-18°C is ideal), soft pillows and a sturdy mattress also help. So I arm myself with my fluffiest pillows and turn the heating down. Since it's only my first night testing this ritual, I'm still wide awake at 1am and only manage to drift off after 20 minutes of German verb tenses.



TUESDAY
Eat right, sleep right

I wake up to my alarm clock at 7am feeling utterly exhausted. I know too much caffeine doesn't exactly help with insomnia but I grab a second cup of coffee at Starbucks on my way into work to power through the fatigue. I decide to give EF Medispa nutritionist Kim Pearson a call to find out what other foods could be affecting my sleep. "Takeaways, especially Indian, and other heavy, fatty meals can cause heartburn and acid reflux," she tells me. Alcohol is another offender. "It might help you to wind down but one study found that a glass of whisky or vodka mixed with

a caffeine-free mixer at bedtime increased the amount of time women spent awake during the night and diminished the quality of sleep, too." So what *should* I eat? "Tart [sour] cherries and their juice," advises Pearson. "They're a natural source of melatonin, the hormone that helps regulate sleep patterns." Fish, especially salmon and tuna, also gets a thumbs up – "It's rich in vitamin B6, which is key for making melatonin." Not having enough magnesium in your diet can cause poor sleep, too, says Pearson. She suggests snacking on magnesium-rich almonds throughout the day. For dinner, I have a grilled tuna steak with an almond-packed green salad and a handful of cherries for >