

(£19, uk.loccitane.com), and feel my shoulders relax as I breathe in the soothing scent. I hop out and slather Aveda's Stress-Fix Body Creme (£36, aveda.com) – a light cream containing lavender and clary sage – all over, then get into bed feeling warm and relaxed. I drift off after about 20 minutes.

## TUESDAY

### *Block out the light*

I don't exactly bounce out of bed when my alarm goes off, but I feel like I've slept well, only waking a couple of times in the night. I've started making a note of anything that could be inhibiting my sleep patterns, and one of those things is the street light outside my window. As my curtains are flimsy, it casts a bright light into my room. According to the National Sleep Foundation, exposure to light is a key factor in how sleep is regulated. Melatonin, a hormone associated with sleep onset, is released into blood after the sun has gone down, usually at around 9pm. As levels rise, you feel less alert, ready to sleep. Exposure to light inhibits the release of melatonin, preventing the onset of that sleepy feeling. As I'm not going to get heavier curtains any time soon, I decide to try out an eye mask Gwyneth Paltrow has recommended on goop.com: Magellan's Good Night Sleep Mask (about £8.70, magellans.com). It feels pretty alien, but does block out every speck of light. After a few minutes of tossing and turning, getting used to wearing a band around my head, I fall into a deep sleep.

### YOUR CHEAT SHEET TO A SOLID SLEEP

- Stick to a schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Make your bedroom a room where you feel relaxed and comfortable.
- Pay attention to what you eat and drink.
- Invest in a once-weekly acupuncture session.
- Exercising regularly will not only tire you out but help to relax you, too.
- Create a sleep ritual – whether it's a warm bath, a cup of herbal tea or relaxing music, habits that work to relax your mind and body are key.

## WEDNESDAY

### *DIY aromatherapy*

What a difference the darkness makes – I feel more on the ball at work, and even cut out my daily mid-morning espresso. Buoyed by my success, I decide that tonight I'm going to try a concept I've read about, DIY style. Italian bedding designer Magniflex has made a mattress infused with the scent of lavender that's released as you sleep. I don't have the time or money to buy a new mattress (this one's about £805) so I take matters into my own hands. According to *Psychology Today*, the scents of vanilla, lavender and jasmine reduce anxiety and are conducive to sleep, so I stock up on these essential oils. Before bed, I enthusiastically shake all three bottles around on my sheets and pillowcases. An hour later, I'm lying

awake with a crushing headache. I clearly went way overboard – the smell of the three oils combined is eye-watering. I open the window and hope for the best, but am awake for a few more hours before I fall asleep.

## THURSDAY

### *Skincare for a better slumber*

A terrible day follows last night's terrible sleep. I can't focus at work, and turn to sugary cupcakes at midday for energy. I cancel my dinner plans as I'm exhausted and head home feeling miserable. Tonight I've decided to try a safer option: beauty products designed to induce sleep – a face mask can't possibly keep me up all night, right? I start off by cleansing with Decléor's Aroma Night Neroli Essential Night Balm (£55, decléor.

co.uk). Although not officially a cleanser, I find its rich balmy texture works wonders at taking off all traces of make-up – just massage on to dry skin, then remove with a warm, wet muslin cloth. Next, I apply a thick layer of This Works No Wrinkles Midnight Moisture (£46, thisworks.com) as a face mask and read a book for 15 minutes while its shea butter and jojoba-rich formula works its magic. I finish with a few drops of Kiehl's Midnight Recovery Concentrate (£36, kiehls.co.uk), rich in evening primrose oil, for an extra hydration boost. The products have a soothing smell and the ritual of applying them before bed is comforting. I feel my lids getting heavy after a few minutes.

## FRIDAY

### *Practice makes perfect*

I sleep well with no disturbances and wake up to soft, glowing skin, which instantly puts me in a good mood. Though I arrive home tired after a day's work, I still make the effort to repeat the routine I established last night. It's chilly, so I apply This Works Deep Sleep Dream Cream (£18, thisworks.com), a rich moisturiser containing camomile and vetiver, to my hands and feet before popping on a pair of cashmere socks and gloves. I fix my eye mask in place, and climb into bed. I don't know if it's the skincare, the socks, the mask or the combination of all three, but I fall into a blissful sleep almost instantly.

### SO DID I GET MORE ZZZS?

I feel like I've finally cracked the secret to a good night's sleep. The combination of using products I find relaxing and the routine of applying them seems to calm my mind and signal to my body it's time to sleep. The extra effort it takes to perform the routine is totally worth the restful night that follows. □

## THE ULTIMATE SLUMBER KIT



Lavender & Lovage Scented Candle, £39, Jo Malone London (selfridges.com)



No Wrinkles Midnight Moisture, £46, This Works (thisworks.com)



Stress-Fix Body Creme, £36, Aveda (aveda.co.uk)



Cashmere bed socks, £32, The White Company (thewhitecompany.com)



Aroma Night Neroli Essential Night Balm, £55, Decléor (decléor.co.uk)