

SLEEP GUIDE

A collection of sleep apps and tips to help you nod off

Relax Melodies

This is a very comprehensive app with



many features available free. If sounds send you to sleep, you can choose between about 40

options, including a number of rain choices (on roof, heavy, in a storm and more) various kinds of music and the sound of trains, crickets, frogs, and an oscillating fan – that's just to start! By pressing the timer button, you can set the sound to go for as long as you like and you can also combine sounds.

What many people will find useful are the meditations, including a 15-minute body scan. Others include guided meditations designed to help you de-stress, take control of your dreams, reduce tinnitus, and "relaxed lifestyle coaching tools". I found the 15 minute body scan a useful relaxation tool for getting to sleep – the female voice was very soothing.

Nothing much happens

This is not an app, but a free podcast. This is a library of very boring bedtime



stories for adults. They're read slowly in a very soothing

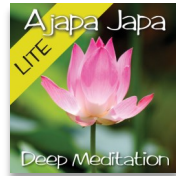
female voice. As the title suggests, these are stories about nothing very much – for example, a trip to the farmers market in detail. Each story is repeated three times and is strongly recommended by one of our members for getting you off to sleep.

Paid apps – "Calm" and "Headspace"

These are both excellent apps with many features for helping you get to sleep. Calm costs about \$80 a year and Headspace, \$150. When you download these apps, you will be asked to sign up with your name, email address and password for a seven-day free trial. However, given that there are many free apps with similar features, we suggest that you give these a go first.



Ajapa japa lite



This free app was recommended by one of our members as a great way to get off to sleep, although that's not what it's designed for. It's designed by a yoga teacher as a meditation app to be done sitting and has a soothing male voice. It's very relaxing!

Relax and sleep well

This is another app

with many free features from self-help author and hypnotherapist,



Glenn Harrold. There's a guided sleep meditation called "awake ending" as well as a mindfulness script for releasing anxiety and a "Solfeggio relax and sleep" guide. I found Glenn's voice and manner rather off-putting to begin with, but the "awake ending" feature did help to send me off to sleep. If being told you are "a being of living light and love" with "divine aspects" doesn't irritate you as it did me, then the "Solfeggio 30-minute relax and sleep guide" might work for you.

We've tested out some great free sleep apps to help you nod off!

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

Pillows for neck pain

For back and side sleepers - and these are the positions that are easiest on your neck - the most comfortable pillows are ones that shape themselves to your neck and head. These include feather pillows and memory foam pillows, as well as ones that are specially shaped with a hollow for the head and a high edge for the neck.



How you feel in the morning is a good guide to how well your pillow suits you; if you can't find a pillow that's the right height, try one that's height-adjustable. These can be pillows with a couple of removable inserts as well as a core pillow, or you can even get a water pillow, which has a pouch you can fill with different amounts of water to make the pillow higher or lower.

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When worry is stopping you from sleeping...

- Disconnect from work well before you plan to sleep, so that it's not at the forefront of your mind.
- Write down what you're worried about before you go to bed. This might seem counter-intuitive, but many people find it helpful.
- If you stress about everything that's on your plate while you're lying in bed, make a to-do list before you go to bed.

QUICK TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

Cooling down helps you sleep, so sleep in a cool room. This is one reason why having a hot shower before you go to bed can help you sleep – you cool down afterwards.

Stop looking at screens at least half an hour (many experts say 1 to 2 hours) before you intend to sleep, as exposure to blue light mimics bright sunlight and tells your brain to stop producing melatonin, which disturbs your circadian rhythm and thus your sleep-wake cycle.

Get some exercise during the day, but not right before bedtime. According to Sleep.org, people who exercise in the morning get quite a lot more of the most restorative stage of sleep compared to those who exercise later in the day. Essentially, this is because morning exercise helps to reset your circadian rhythm, even more so if you exercise outside in morning sunlight.

Plan your sleep – go to bed and get up at the same time every day.

Sleep studies show that most people wake up for longer or shorter periods during the night. One way of dealing with waking up between sleeps is just to accept it as a normal part of your sleep cycle and trust that you will get back to sleep sooner or later.



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