

## Evening Wind-Down Routine

### A Science-Based Checklist for Better Sleep

The quality of your sleep is largely determined by what happens in the 90 minutes before bed. Cortisol levels, core body temperature, and melatonin onset are all shaped by pre-sleep behaviour. This checklist organises evidence-based interventions by timing.

#### 90 MINUTES BEFORE BED

- Finish all food and caloric intake
- Dim overhead lights to 50% or below – bright light delays melatonin onset
- Switch phone to night mode or put on blue-light blocking glasses
- Avoid alcohol – it fragments sleep architecture even if it aids initial sleep onset
- Take sleep supplements now: magnesium glycinate 200–400mg, or L-theanine 200mg

#### 60 MINUTES BEFORE BED

- Set thermostat to 65–68°F (18–20°C) – core cooling drives sleep onset
- Take a warm shower or bath (10–15 min) to accelerate peripheral vasodilation
- Stop all work, news, and email – protect this window from cortisol triggers
- Shift to low-stimulation activity: paper reading, light journaling, gentle stretching

#### 30 MINUTES BEFORE BED

- Write tomorrow's priority list – offload working memory before sleep
- Turn off all screens or switch to a single dim amber light source
- Practice box breathing (4-4-4-4) or 4-7-8 breathing for 5 minutes
- Move to the bedroom only when you feel genuinely sleepy

#### IN BED

- Ensure the room is fully dark – even dim ambient light reduces sleep quality