THE SEVEN-NIGHT BEDTIME RESET

A small behavioral experiment for narrowing the gap between the bedtime you intend and the bedtime you actually choose.

Before night one

Choose a realistic sleep opportunity. Work backward from the wake time you actually need. This is not a treatment for insomnia, sleep apnea, mania, or shift-work constraints.

Pick one shutdown cue. Use a lamp change, alarm, or phone-charging location 30-45 minutes before lights out. Attach one action: “When the cue happens, I will finish the current activity and place my phone in its charging spot.”

Protect leisure earlier. Schedule a defined block of enjoyable time before the cue. The aim is not to erase autonomy; it is to stop borrowing it from sleep.

Daily log

Night	Intended bed	Actual attempt	What filled the gap?	Wake time
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Measure the delay between intention and the attempt to sleep. A rough number is enough. Do not turn the log into a score of personal worth.

THE NIGHTLY PROTOCOL

Repeat the same simple sequence for seven nights. Change only one lever at a time so the result is interpretable.

1. Protect the pleasure

Take your planned leisure earlier. Decide its endpoint before starting: one episode, twenty pages, or thirty minutes.

2. Obey the cue, not the mood

When the shutdown cue occurs, complete the linked action even if you do not feel perfectly ready.

3. Reduce one source of friction

Use do-not-disturb, grayscale, a separate alarm, or a charging spot away from bed. Keep emergency access available.

4. Keep the routine short

Prepare for morning, wash, and choose one quiet activity. A twelve-step wellness routine is easy to avoid.

5. Go to bed when sleepy

If you are not sleepy, stay in dim light with a quiet activity outside bed. Do not rehearse frustration under the covers.

6. Keep wake time reasonably stable

One late night does not require sleeping through most of the next morning. Protect the next night’s sleep pressure.

7. Review without punishment

At the end of the week, look for the repeated activity and the nights when the cue worked. Keep the useful lever; revise the rest.

End-of-week review

Median bedtime delay: _____ minutes Nights within 15 minutes of plan: _____ / 7

The most common competing activity: _____

One lever to keep next week: _____

Safety note: Persistent inability to sleep despite adequate opportunity, loud snoring or gasping, severe daytime sleepiness, restless legs, mania, or major mood symptoms deserve professional assessment. CBT-I is first-line care for chronic insomnia; this worksheet is a behavioral experiment, not medical treatment.