

SLEEP AIDS

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) affects sleep by interacting with neurotransmitters GABA, adenosine and serotonin. The root or rhizome is used in teas or processed into an extract for use in supplements. The extract is standardized to its valerenic acid content, usually containing 0.3-0.8% of the constituent. Doses in supplements are typically 150-600 mg. Self-titrate your dose when using [valerian extract](#), start with a few drops and increase as needed.

Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) is another botanical used to address generalized anxiety and insomnia. Researchers have found passionflower functions by increasing levels of GABA, producing a relaxation effect and normalizing circadian rhythms. Self-titrate your dose when using [passionflower extract](#), start with a few drops and increase as needed.

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a bitter-sweet, cooling herb that calms the nerves, balances serotonin levels, reduces inflammation and promotes healing. Self-titrate your dose when using [St. John's Wort](#) extract, start with a few drops and increase as needed.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) possessing essential oils chemically similar to those found in valerian root, catnip is a sedative in humans and has traditionally been used to treat insomnia, indigestion, nervousness, amenorrhea, flatulence, coughs, colds and fevers. Self-titrate your dose when using [catnip extract](#), start with a few drops and increase as needed.

Scullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) is an aromatic, anticonvulsive, antispasmodic, antibacterial and sedative herb. Self-titrate your dose when using [scullcap extract](#), start with a few drops and increase as needed.

Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) has ancient roots as an antiviral and stomach-calming agent as well as a treatment for sleep disorders caused by nervousness or tension. Steep 1-2 teaspoons of [lemon balm](#) in boiling water for 10 minutes as a tea.

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) is an extremely popular floral herb found in essential oil form, teas, extracts and in other botanical blends to promote relaxation and relieve stress. Steep 1-2 teaspoons of [lavender flowers](#) in boiling water for 10 minutes as a tea. Alternatively, use a few drops of essential oil diluted in a warm bath or rub a few drops on the soles of your feet before bed.

Melatonin (*N*-acetyl-5-methoxytryptamine) is a hormone that is released by the pineal gland and the skin. In addition to regulating the sleep-wake cycle, it is intricately linked to the fight or flight response, and digestion. Melatonin plays a role in mitigating stress, as well as controlling the circadian rhythm. Do not take more than 10mg at one time.

When taking melatonin, it is best to vary the dosage every night ... having a different dosage on each night ... from 1.5mg – 9mg. By varying the dosage every night, you will not inhibit the body's natural production of melatonin.

L-theanine is an amino acid found in green tea. It increases brain levels of serotonin, dopamine and GABA, and is an inhibitory neurotransmitter that helps the body and mind relax. Anxiety-reducing effects of L-theanine are believed to be mediated by enhanced alpha brain wave activity in the occipital and parietal regions that are dose dependent and similar to EEG changes observed during meditation. Calming effects may last 8 to 10 hours and are usually experienced within 30 minutes following ingestion of L-theanine at doses between 50 and 200 mg.

CBD from *cannabis sativa* is the main non-psychoactive ingredient in cannabis. CBD has anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic and anti-anxiety properties. CBD comes in varying strengths and you will need to self-titrate your dosage.

Sleep Hygiene Tips

Sleep hygiene is a term used to describe how we prepare our minds and bodies for sleep, beginning 2-3 hours before actual anticipated sleep.

- At least 2-3 hours prior to sleep, have a balanced dinner to avoid blood sugar dropping in the middle of the night. Be sure to optimize your blood sugar handling during the day.
- Make a plan to abstain from electronic devices 1-2 hours prior to sleep - avoid blue light emissions from electronic devices 1-2 hours before bed ... and avoid irritating or emotionally triggering social media, email, etc. before bed.
- Do not watch emotionally disruptive films and entertainment before bed.
- Avoid a hard workout or any stimulating activities 3-4 hours prior to sleep.
- Reduce or eliminate caffeine (from coffee, tea, chocolate) in the diet; or no more than 1-2 cups of coffee or tea before lunch. It takes 8 hours for caffeine to work through your system.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule, even on weekends.
- Practice gratitude.
- Listen to ambient healing music that uses binaural beats and/or solfeggio frequencies that calm the mind and nervous system ... try Mettaverse Music <https://mettaverse.com/pages/listen>