


















STOP SCREENS SABOTAGING YOUR SLEEP

Tip Sheet

Our screen habits can significantly sabotage our sleep, impacting both the amount and quality of sleep we accumulate each night. Blue light, which is emitted from the sun, our digital devices and lighting, signals to our brain to be alert and in turn, our body doesn't make the sleep hormone melatonin. When we don't produce melatonin, it results in sleep delays and shortens the REM sleep stage of sleep which is critical for memory consolidation. Sleep is vital for our mental wellbeing, physical health and learning (it is impossible to focus when we're tired). We need to ensure that our screen habits aren't eroding or compromising our sleep. Here is a menu of micro-habits to help:

-  **Have a digital curfew** - Ideally switch off devices 60 minutes before you want to fall asleep. Set a reminder of your phone to nudge you to switch off.
-  **Do a digital swap** - Listening to music, an audiobook, podcast, or meditation or mindfulness app can be a better screen alternative than social media, gaming or checking emails.
-  **Go bigger** - Using a larger screen is a better option as they tend to emit less blue light and you typically sit further away from a larger screen, like your TV.
-  **Keep your bedroom tech-free zone** - Your brain needs to associate your bedroom with sleep. Even seeing your phone or laptop can be a psychological trigger for you to start thinking about what was happening online during the day (for example, did my friend reply to my message). Buy a traditional alarm clock.
-  **Establish a landing zone** - Have a designated spot in your house where all devices can be stored overnight. This removes any decision fatigue that can sometimes deter us from keeping technology out of our bedrooms.
-  **Invest in a lockable box** - If you can't resist your tech-temptations, lock them up. Out of sight, out of mind. Consider purchasing an InCharge Box (*Use the promo code 'DRKRISTY' for \$25 discount*).
-  **If your phone must come into your bedroom, ensure it's on silent and out of sight** - Many adolescents and adults are woken up by alerts and notifications. Ensure your phone is on Airplane mode and all notifications have been silenced. Alerts and notifications wake you up and mean that you may not be getting enough completed sleep cycles. You need between 4-6 completed cycles of sleep each night.
-  **Use Night Shift or Twilight modes to reduce the intensity of the blue light that comes from your devices** - Remember, the smaller the device, the more blue light is emitted to illuminate the screen.

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Avoid social media, emails and gaming at night - These activities can hyper-arouse the brain making it difficult to fall asleep. You're also more likely to make errors, or send a terse message or reply as your prefrontal cortex switches off and your amygdala switches on at night.
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Dim your screen brightness - Go to your settings to reduce the brightness of your screen. This will not eliminate blue light, but will reduce the intensity of the light.
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Wear blue light blocking glasses at night - If you really must be on a screen before bed, invest in some blue light blocking glasses. *Use the code 'DRKRISTY' to get 10% off with Baxter Blue.*
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Be mindful of other blue light sources - While our screens are a common culprit, many energy efficient lights also emit blue light. So use lamps, candles, red bulb light and/or dim or reduce LED and fluorescent lighting.
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Reset your circadian rhythm - Get exposure to natural sunlight within 340 minutes of waking up. Use artificial lights if waking up in the dark. This sends a message to your hypothalamus and creates an alert state.
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Don't bookend your day with a device - Using technology first thing in the morning, or last thing at night can activate your limbic brain and trigger your stress response. Try having the first ten minutes and last 60 minutes, as device-free times of the day.
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F.lux - Is a free piece of software that you install on laptops and desktop computers to make the colour of your computer's display adapt to the time of day- warm at night and like sunlight during the day.

ABOUT DR KRISTY

Having personally experienced how our always-on digital culture is compromising people's wellbeing and is counter to optimal and sustainable performance, award-winning researcher and speaker Dr Kristy Goodwin is on a mission to promote employee wellbeing and bolster workplace productivity in an always-on digital world.

As one of Australia's digital wellbeing and productivity experts, she shares practical brain-based hacks to tame tech habits and the latest evidence-based strategies to decode the neurobiology of peak performance in the technological era. Senior business leaders and HR executives from the country's top organisations engage Dr Kristy to help them promote employee digital wellbeing and performance.



Her roster of clients includes
Apple, Optus, Deutsche Bank, Bank of Queensland, Challenger, Westpac, DLA Piper, Westpac, McDonald's, Westfield, Randstad, the Reserve Bank of Australia, Cuscal, State Street, National Broadband Network and Foxtel.