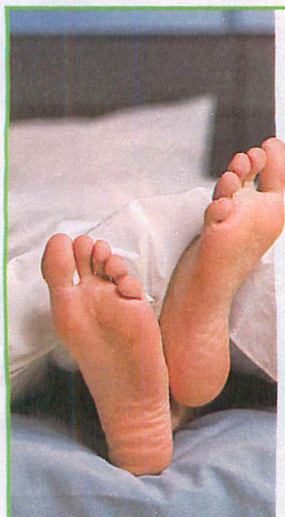


# 6 relaxation tricks that'll make you Sleep better tonight!

What you do just before and after crawling under the covers can make all the difference in how fast you drift off! So to make sure you'll catch the dreamland express...

## 1 Wiggle your toes!

Studies confirm that simply wiggling your toes promotes faster, sounder sleep in everyone from kids to soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder! Why? Wiggling relaxes every muscle in the foot, which triggers other muscles to relax as well. "And since the body and mind are connected, sleep becomes much easier," says reflexology researcher Kevin Kunz, coauthor of *Complete Reflexology for Life*. How long should you wiggle? About a minute, he says, or as long as it takes to feel the day's tension slip away.



## 2 Try the nightcap health pros swear by!

Proven effective for combating anxiety and depression, inositol, a little-known member of the B-complex family, is also seen by many experts as a potent insomnia-buster. "It boosts reception of the neurotransmitter serotonin, and when serotonin is high, you feel happy and relaxed," says Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., author of *The 150 Most Effective Ways to Boost Your Energy*. "Many of my colleagues and I take it for sleep ourselves, because we've collectively observed it works." Find it at health-food stores or online at [totalhealthvitamins.net](http://totalhealthvitamins.net). Start with 500 mg. just before bed, and add more as needed.



## Did you know?

A Mayo Clinic study shows partners of snorers lose an average of one hour of sleep per night! Check out a new product called Silent Snooz, an allergen-free nasal dilator designed to keep snoring to a minimum. It's available at drugstores for \$12.95, or \$7.99 at [America Rx.com](http://AmericaRx.com).

## 4 Skip the nightgown or p.j.'s!

In one British study, 85% of subjects who normally wore nightclothes reported falling asleep faster without them! That's not surprising, says Steven Y. Park, M.D., author of *Sleep, Interrupted*, since any relative drop in temperature—the body's own or that of its surroundings—signals the brain that it's sleep time, and wearing less is an easy way to cool off. And without clothes to get in your way, adjusting to middle-of-the-night temperature changes is as easy as pulling up or kicking off a blanket.

## 5 Breathe right—and left!



Try "alternate nostril breathing," a yoga practice that's been shown to calm the mind and promote sleep. How it's done: Cover your left nostril with a finger while inhaling through your right nostril, then cover the right nostril and exhale through the left one; repeat 10 times. "This boosts the brain's levels of soothing neurotransmitters like dopamine and endorphins," says Maoshing Ni, Ph.D., author of *Second Spring: Dr. Mao's Hundreds of Natural Secrets for Women to Revitalize and Regenerate at Any Age*.

## 3 Rub your stomach!

The trick here: making bigger and bigger concentric circles around your navel, then reversing direction and working your way back in. "It promotes relaxation, boosts blood flow, triggers relaxing hormones and optimizes digestion," says Suzanne Hendershot, massage therapy manager at St. Rita's Medical Center in Lima, Ohio. She uses the tummy rub for patients dealing with everything from garden-variety insomnia to anxiety to the aftereffects of open heart surgery!



## 6 Curl up!

Although you may move during the night, starting out in a fetal position releases hidden shoulder and neck tension that almost everyone carries, helping you sleep better, says Dr. Park. Another reason? "Your spine, which has natural curves in the lower back, middle and near your neck, isn't meant to be straight," he says. So curling up on your side is the position that's least stressful for your back, and your best guarantee of restful zzzs. **Tip:** To minimize pressure on your hips, tuck a pillow between your hips.

