

Sleep Positives and Negatives

By Nicola Morgan, The Teenage Brain Woman,
to accompany the healthy sleep advice on her
website: www.nicolamorgan.com



Sleep positives: things you CAN include in your winding-down routine leading to bed

- Dim lighting – no daylight; close curtain/blind; switch off screens + phone; turn off main light
- Shower or bath
- Listen to soft, slow music
- Think what went well today; focus on positive thoughts
- Lavender oil or sleep balm/spray (a few drops or spray on pillow/sleep clothes)
- Stretches or gentle yoga
- A few minutes of deep breathing / belly-breathing
- Light unsugary snack if hungry. Perhaps small sandwich; piece of cheese and fruit; cream cheese on oatcakes; nuts
- Small milky drink or herbal tea
- Organise things ready for the morning
- Put clothes tidily
- Get undressed and into sleep clothes
- Clean face and teeth
- Write journal
- Write any worries down and put the paper by the door
- Draw, doodle or colour in
- Read for pleasure before turning bedside light out

Sleep negatives: avoid completely during 1-2 hours before bed:

- Daylight
- Bright light of any sort
- Screens (ebook readers are OK if you turn notifications off and dim the light)
- Caffeine – coffee, tea and cola drinks (unless caffeine-free eg herbal or fruit tea)
- Energy drinks
- Arguments and stress
- Strenuous exercise that makes you out of breath
- Too much food; any spicy, sugary or rich food
- Work
- Loud, fast music
- Messy bedroom
- Alcohol – it raises heartrate and reduces the deep sleep essential for restoration

General tip: your sleeping space should be dark, safe, quiet and slightly cool – like a cave