

## [Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / Moment 112 - Want To Sleep Better? Listen To This: Matthew Walker

My question is, what are the things that in the modern society are standing in the way of sleep?

We've touched on some of them loosely, but some of the big obvious things, the things that you would suggest doing, very actionable things we could do straight away to improve our chances of having that healthy, deep sleep that we need to be optimal in every regard of our health and performance.

There's probably, I think, five standard tips, what we call sleep hygiene that you can do, and then I'll come on to maybe just some unconventional tips that we've touched on.

We've spoken about many of these.

The first thing I would recommend people to do, and this is why when some people say, what about this new sleep supplement or it's 40 quid for this bottle of these new sleep natural medications, I'm going to give it a try, I would say try these tried and true things first before you spend your money on supplements.

The first thing is regularity.

Go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time, no matter whether it's the weekday or the weekend.

Your brain expects regularity.

It thrives best under conditions of regularity.

When you give it regularity, you can improve the quantity and the quality of your sleep.

The second thing is get some darkness at night.

As I said, we don't get enough darkness in the modern world.

The trick I would offer, and I don't like the word hack, but the suggestion would be, in the last hour before bed, try this experiment for everyone listening for the next week.

Dim down half of the lights or switch off half of the lights or even three quarters of the lights in your home in the last hour before bed.

All of the lights in every room.

In all of the rooms, switch off almost all of the light.

I'm not suggesting be unsafe and walk around in the darkness in the last hour.

That's not what I'm saying.

Just dimmed out, switch off half of the lights.

You will be surprised at how sleepy that darkness will make you feel.

It's also an incredible behavioral trigger to signal to your brain that it is time for sleep, that darkness is around me.

That's the second tip, is darkness.

The third tip is temperature.

Most people sleep in an ambient bedroom temperature that is too high, and you need to aim for a bedroom temperature of about 18, 18 and a half degrees Celsius, around about 65 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit, if I'm probably butchering the mathematics there on that, but you need to get cool.

Now, you couldn't wash it socks.

You can have a hot water bottle.

That's fine.

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Ambient needs to be cold, because you need to drop your core body temperature and your brain temperature by about one degree Celsius to fall asleep and stay asleep.

It's the reason that you will always find it easier to fall asleep in a room that's too cold than too hot.

Make your bedroom cold, make it dark like a cave.

The fourth question would be, what we've, or fourth suggestion would be walk it out, and we've spoken about this.

The 30 minute rule, you know, get up, do something different or meditate, you know, don't lie in bed awake for too long.

Then the final two things we've spoken about, well, we've spoken about caffeine.

We haven't spoken about alcohol, but let me just say as the kind of headline of it, alcohol is not a sleep aid.

Many people use it as a sleep aid.

It is not your friend.

Alcohol again is a sedative, so it knocks you out.

The second is that it fragments your sleep.

Usually you wake up, your sleep is littered with all of these small awakenings.

Most of them you don't remember because there's too brief, but it makes for miserable, lousy quality sleep.

The final thing is that alcohol is very good at blocking your REM sleep or your dream sleep, which we know is critical for many other functions as well.

So alcohol is not your friend.

That's the sort of the final tip.

Again, you know, just if you're with friends, have a glass of red wine, just know, okay, my sleep is not going to be great.

No, thank you, Matt.

Yeah, okay.

I'm joking.

You know, I'm not.

Yeah.

I'm joking.

Of course.

It's just, you know, live life too.

Of course, yeah.

I'm not saying that.

I was thinking there about the other sort of behavioural things that we do that harm our sleep as well.

We talked about coffee earlier on, avoiding that.

It's weird that people drink it off to dessert in the evening, so I never understood that because that's an old tradition, but the other thing obviously that the modern generation are even more susceptible to is to have a quick TikTok, look at the social media account or something.

Now, I thought, you know, there's a lot of different products out there that are trying

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to help with the light that comes from these screens that I think is the cause of what's keeping us awake, but there's this little button called dark mode on my iPad.

Oh, there's also one called night shift.

So if I just pop that on, Bob's your uncle, and I can crack on with my screen time.

True or false?

Partly true.

Oh, good.

Okay.

So I can do one night mode and dark mode, and then I can carry on using my iPad.

Partly true.

So it turns out that the blue light from screens does have an impact on sleep.

So there's a great study done by Harvard Medical School by some colleagues there, and they showed that reading for an hour on an iPad just before bed, relative to just reading a book in dim light, firstly, it delayed the time with which people fell asleep.

So it took them a lot longer to fall asleep.

And it reduced the total amount of sleep that they had.

Third, it decreased a sleep-related hormone called melatonin.

It delayed the release of that melatonin, and it reduced the amount of melatonin.

And finally, it reduced the amount of rapid eye movement sleep.

So it had significantly.

Significantly.

The melatonin point.

Yeah.

Significantly.

So it delayed the release by about somewhere between 90 minutes to two hours across the individuals.

So in other words, your brain wasn't.

So what melatonin does, it's called the hormone of darkness or the vampire hormone.

Just because it makes you want to bite into people's necks because it signals to your brain that it's nighttime, that it's darkness.

And so your brain needs the signal of melatonin for it to understand when is it dark.

In other words, it needs to understand by way of melatonin when it is time to fall asleep.

And when you're bathed in electric light at night, and especially when you're getting blue light from these devices, your brain is fooled into thinking it's still daytime.

And when there is light emitting through your retina, coming into your brain, it signals to a part of your brain to hit the brakes on melatonin.

And your brain will not release melatonin.

So what was happening with this iPad reading is that you are artificially telling the brain it's still daytime and the brakes on melatonin was still shut on.

And so melatonin was not starting to be released until much later.

And what was it also interesting about the study, by the way, is that when they stopped the iPad reading, the sleep disrupted pattern continued for several days later.

In other words, it was almost like a drug that it had a washout period that was a blast

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radius to it.

Now there's been some great work by a wonderful sleep scientist in Australia, Michael Gradazar, and he has added to this story, and he said, it's not just the blue light.

These devices, the principal function of these devices is that they are attention capture devices.

Just like you said, I'm just going to have a wee little TikTok before bed.

They are in the attention economy.

And all they care about is capturing your attention for current currency, and they make a lot of money from it.

What that attention does is that it stimulates your brain.

And when your brain is stimulated, it's very difficult for you to fall asleep.

And it creates what we call sleep procrastination, where you're lying in bed and you could be perfectly sleepy and you could fall asleep right now.

But then you sort of check social media and they think, oh, I'll just shoot that last email.

And then I'll order that last thing on sort of, you know, Amazon.

And then you get a text back from your friend and you start texting them.

And then you look up and it's now an hour later and you're an hour deficient on sleep.

So it's the activation of your cerebral cortex by these devices.

That is perhaps the more harmful aspect of them regarding your sleep.

Now here again, I don't want to be finger wagging.

You know, the genie of technology is out the bottle and it's not going back in any time soon.

There's nothing that I'm going to say as a sleep researcher that's going to change that.

I don't take my phone into my bedroom.

I put my phone out in the kitchen and I don't see it until morning, but lots of people do and fair enough.

But there's another rule that I've stolen from another friend called Michael Grandner who's here in America at the University of Tucson in Arizona.

He has this great rule regarding technology and it's the following that if you really must take your phone into your bedroom, you can only use it standing up.

And what you'll find is that after about six or seven minutes standing up, you think, I'm just going to sit down on the bed and at that point, as soon as your backside hits the bed, you're done.

You've got to put the phone away.

I think it's a great rule of thumb if you need to take technology in the bedroom.

I have some breaking news and no, this is an emergency.

I've spent the last two years writing a book and I've written 33 laws for business, marketing and life that I derived from all of these conversations I've had here.

I traveled the world to write this book.

I interviewed some of the most incredible people.

I did six months of extensive research on scientific studies and principles to co-operate everything that I wrote into these 33 laws.

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And ladies and gentlemen, that book called The Diary of a CEO, The 33 Laws for Business, Marketing and Life is now available for pre-order and there are only 5,000 signed copies and it's first come, first served.

The link is in the bio right now, so if you want that book, honestly, it's the best book I've ever written.

It's the book I always should have written.

It's the book I also wish someone had written for me when I was starting out on my career.

I'm really proud of it, I'm really, really proud of it, really, really proud of it and

I can't wait for all of you to get to read it.

It's out in August.

I couldn't be more excited about this as you can probably tell.

I don't know what to say other than the words I've said to emphasize my excitement because

I think it's important and I think it's really valuable.

Link in the description.