

Blue Zones[®] Bedroom Checklist

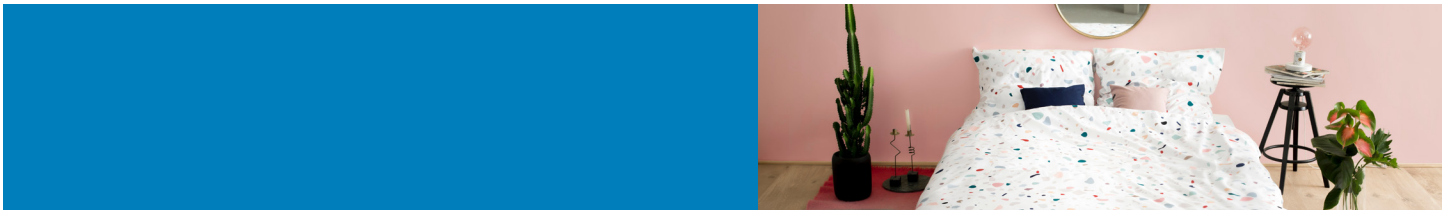


Sleep is more than a luxury. In fact, research suggests that sleep is necessary for optimal health and well-being. Sleep does more for you than just help you to feel rested the next day. Lack of sleep not only increases the risk of health problems – including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension – it can also lead to impaired judgment, risky decision making, and even

decrease your attractiveness. Aiming for 7-8 hours of sleep each night is ideal to optimize your health and longevity.¹ The key to getting a good night's sleep is following a relaxing bedtime routine and creating a bedroom environment that is conducive to sleep. The purpose of the Blue Zones[®] Bedroom Checklist is to help you assess your bedroom environment to make sure that it is a sanctuary for sleep.

Directions

1. Print and fill out the questionnaire while walking through your bedroom.
2. Add up your points to see your score.
3. Start making changes to your bedroom environment based on the recommendations given. These changes don't have to be made all at once – pick the easier ones to start with and continue completing at least one item each week.
4. Complete this tool again in three months to see how many points you've gained and how much your rankings and sleep have improved!



Check off each item you are currently doing, and add up the points to see how supportive your bedroom environment is of healthy sleep.

Points

I do this now!

KNOW YOUR SNORE SCORE

5

How to do it: Determine your snore score by taking the short assessment in Appendix 1. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions, discuss your symptoms with a medical provider.

Why do it? The Snore Score was developed by the American Sleep Apnea Association to help individuals assess their risk of sleep apnea, which is a medical condition that can impair sleep and cause health problems. It is important to identify whether sleep problems are due to a medical condition so it can be treated early and appropriately.

3

OWN A COMFORTABLE MATTRESS AND COMFORTABLE PILLOWS

How to do it: Mattresses should be replaced every 8-10 years. Make sure that your mattress is not sagging and is supporting you comfortably during sleep. When choosing a mattress, spend at least 10 minutes testing it out before buying. Choose pillows that support your head and neck and are comfortable to you.

Why do it? Having a comfortable mattress and comfortable pillows are important to getting a good night sleep.² Getting a good night sleep improves productivity, physical and emotional health, and longevity.³

5

SET THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR BEDROOM TO 65°F

How to do it: Set your thermostat to 65°F at bedtime. If you have a programmable thermostat, program it to automatically adjust to 65°F during sleeping hours.

Why do it? Temperatures below 54°F or above 75°F can actually wake you up at night. The ideal temperature for sleep is around 65°F. If it feels a little colder than you’d like, grab a couple of extra blankets.

3

DIM THE LIGHTS AN HOUR BEFORE BED

How to do it: Dim the lights in your home an hour before you go to sleep.

Why do it? Practicing good sleep hygiene is the first step to getting the optimal 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Dimming the lights before bedtime prepares your body for sleep, allowing you to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.

3

REMOVE DIGITAL ALARM CLOCKS OR TURN THE CLOCK SO IT IS FACING AWAY FROM THE BEDSIDE

How to do it: Remove digital alarm clocks from your bedroom or turn your clock away from your bedside so the time is not visible to you.

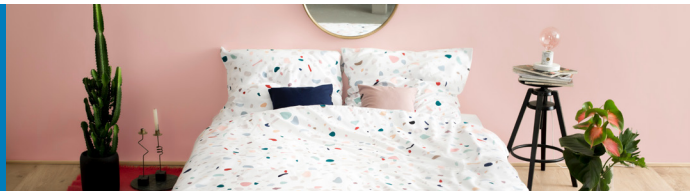
Why do it? The light from digital alarm clocks can disrupt sleep. In addition, hiding your clock from your line of sight will help you avoid clock watching during the night.

5

HANG LIGHT-BLOCKING WINDOW SHADES IN THE BEDROOM

How to do it: Hang dark shades and heavy drapery that can block out all outside light when drawn.

Why do it? Light can be disruptive to sleep, even light from a clock or a computer.⁴ Make your room as dark as possible for the best sleep.



Points

I do this
now!

5

REMOVE THE TV AND COMPUTER FROM THE BEDROOM

How to do it: Remove all screens from your bedroom including televisions, computers, and cell phones.

Why do it? The bedroom should only be used for sleep and sex. Removing screens from the bedroom helps reinforce the association between the bed and sleep. In addition, artificial light from screens including digital clocks can disrupt sleep.³

5

REMOVE ALL PHONES (INCLUDING CELL PHONES & LANDLINE PHONES) FROM YOUR BEDROOM

How to do it: Remove all phones from the bedroom.

Why do it? Removing phones from the bedroom minimizes interruptions to sleep. The 2011 Sleep in America Poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation found that cell phones were a sleep disturbance.⁵ Twenty percent of generation Y'ers and 18% of generation Z'ers polled said that they are awakened after they go to bed by a phone call, text message, or e-mail, at least a few nights a week.

3

PUT A LAVENDER PLANT NEXT TO THE BED

How to do it: Purchase a lavender plant from your local florist, or sprinkle a little lavender essential oils on your sheets.

Why do it? The smell of lavender is calming, soothing, and helps induce sleep.⁶

3

INSTALL DOUBLE PANED WINDOWS IN THE BEDROOM

How to do it: Install double paned windows in your bedroom.

Why do it? Double paned windows help block out noise, which can be disruptive to sleep.⁷ Another way to block out unwanted sounds is to use earplugs or "white noise" such as a fan, air cleaner, or sound conditioner.

5

USE THE BEDROOM ONLY FOR SLEEP AND SEX

How to do it: Avoid doing work, watching TV, using the computer, or doing anything else that might agitate you in your bedroom.

Why do it? Your bedroom environment should be a comfortable and relaxing place that promotes sleep. Avoiding activities that may lead to stress is one way to ensure the bedroom is a place associated with calm and sleep.

TOTAL

POSSIBLE POINTS (45 possible)

40+ points: Blue Zones Bedroom. You have set up your sleeping environment in a way that allows you to get the best sleep possible. Can you get yourself all the way to scoring 45/45 points?

30 to 39: Almost There. You are well on your way to creating an ideal sleeping environment. What other changes are you going to make to have a Blue Zones Bedroom?

20 to 29: On Your Way. When you begin to pair many of these changes together, you'll start seeing a healthier sleep environment. Which item is first on your list of changes? Get started on that right now.

Below 20: Just Getting Started. Everyone has to start somewhere. Begin the process by prioritizing the changes you want to make and start on them tomorrow.

Appendix 1



WHAT'S YOUR SNORE SCORE™?

1. Are you a loud and/or regular snorer?
2. Have you been observed to gasp or stop breathing during sleep?
3. Do you feel tired or groggy upon awakening, or do you awaken with a headache?
4. Are you often tired or fatigued during the wake time hours?
5. Do you fall asleep sitting, reading, watching TV or driving?
6. Do you often have problems with memory or concentration?

If you have one or more of these symptoms you are at higher risk for having obstructive sleep apnea.

If you are also overweight, have a large neck, and/or have high blood pressure the risk increases even further.

If you or someone close to you answers “yes” to any of the above questions, you should discuss your symptoms with your physician or a sleep specialist. Or ask the American Sleep Apnea Association for more information on the diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea. Different treatment options exist; which is right for you depends upon the severity of your apnea and other aspects of the disorder. Talk to your doctor about choices. Untreated, obstructive sleep apnea can be extremely serious and cannot be ignored.

You may also be interested in attending a meeting of an ASAA A.W.A.K.E. group (A.W.A.K.E. stands for “Alert, Well, And Keeping Energetic,” characteristics that are uncommon in people with untreated sleep apnea.) Contact the ASAA for more information about one in your area.

References

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2 National Sleep Foundation Bedroom Poll http://sleepfoundation.org/sites/default/files/bedroompoll/NSF_Bedroom_Poll_Report.pdf (Accessed 2/9/11).

3 Institute of Medicine Report. Sleep Disorders and Sleep Deprivation: An Unmet Public Health Problem. Released: March 21, 2006. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2006/Sleep-Disorders-and-Sleep-Deprivation-An-Unmet-Public-Health-Problem.aspx> (Accessed 2/9/11)

4 Lockley SW; Evans EE; Scheer FAJL et al. Short-wavelength sensitivity for the direct effects of light on alertness, vigilance, and the waking electroencephalogram in humans. *SLEEP* 2006;29(2): 161-168.

5 National Sleep Foundation 2011 Sleep in America Poll. <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/press-release/annual-sleep-america-poll-exploring-connections-communications-technology-use-> (Accessed 6/2/11)

6 Goel N, Kim H and R Lao. (2005). An olfactory stimulus modifies nighttime sleep in young men and women. *Chronobiology International*; 22 (5): 889-904.

7 Ulrich R, Quan X, Zimring C, Joseph A, and R Choudhary. (2004). The Role of the Physical Environment in the Hospital of the 21st Century: A Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity. Report to The Center for Health Design for the Designing the 21st Century Hospital Project. <http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/other/RoleofthePhysicalEnvironment.pdf> (Accessed 6/3/11)