We can all have a bad night of sleep

and that's perfectly normal,

but how could we try to improve

both the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the quality of our sleep?

[Sleeping with Science]

(Music)

Here are six scientifically \_\_\_\_\_\_ tips

for better sleep.

The first tip is regularity.

Go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time.

Regularity is king,

and it will actually \_\_\_\_\_\_ your sleep

and improve both the quantity and the quality,

no matter whether it's the weekday or the weekend

or even if you've had a bad night of sleep.

And the reason is because deep within your brain,

you actually have a master 24-hour clock.

It expects \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

and works best under conditions of regularity,

including the control of your sleep-wake \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Many of us use an alarm to wake up

but very few of us use a to-bed alarm,

and that's something that can be helpful.

The next tip is temperature.

Keep it cool.

It turns out that your brain and your body

need to \_\_\_\_\_\_ their core temperature by about one degree Celsius

or around two to three degrees Fahrenheit

in order to \_\_\_\_\_ sleep and then to stay asleep.

And this is the reason that you will always find it easier

to fall asleep in a room that's too cold than too hot.

So, the current recommendation

is to aim for a bedroom temperature

of around about 65 degrees Fahrenheit,

or a little over 18 \_\_\_\_\_\_ Celsius.

It sounds cold but cold it must be.

The next tip is darkness.

We are a dark-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ society

and, in fact, we need darkness specifically in the evening

to trigger the release of a hormone called melatonin.

And melatonin helps \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the healthy timing of our sleep.

In the last hour before bed,

try to stay away from all of those computer screens

and tablets and phones.

Dim down half the lights in your house.

You'd actually be quite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

at how sleepy that can make you feel.

If you'd like, you can wear an eye mask

or you can have blackout shades

and that will help best \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

that critical sleep hormone of melatonin.

The next tip is walk it out.

Don't stay in bed awake for long periods of time.

And the general rule of thumb

is if you've been trying to fall asleep

and it's been 25 minutes or so,

or you've woken up and you can't get back to sleep

after 25 minutes,

the recommendation is to get out of bed

and go and do something different.

And the reason is because your brain

is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ associative device.

The brain has learned the association

that the bed is this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of wakefulness,

and we need to break that association.

And by getting out of bed, you can go and do something else.

Only return to bed when you're sleepy.

And in that way, gradually,

your brain will \_\_\_\_\_\_ the association

that your bed is this place of sound and consistent sleep.

The fifth tip is something that we've actually

already spoken about in detail in this series,

which is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of alcohol and caffeine.

So, a good rule of thumb here is to try to stay away

from caffeine in the afternoon and in the evening

and certainly try not to go to bed too tipsy.

The final tip: have a wind-down routine.

I think many of us in the modern world,

we expect to be able to \_\_\_\_\_ into bed at night,

switch off the light,

and we think that sleep is also just like a light switch,

that we should immediately be able to fall asleep.

Well, unfortunately, sleep isn't quite like that

for most of us.

Sleep, as a physiological process,

is much more similar to \_\_\_\_\_\_ a plane.

It takes time for your brain to gradually descend down

onto the firm bedrock of good sleep.

In the last 20 minutes before bed or the last half an hour,

even the last hour,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from your computer and your phone

and try to do something relaxing.

Find out whatever works for you

and when you have found it, stick to that routine.

The last thing I should note

is that if you are suffering from a sleep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

for example, from insomnia or sleep apnea,

then these tips aren't necessarily going to help you.

If I was your sports coach,

I could give you all of these tips to improve your performance,

but if you have a broken \_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

it's not going to make a difference.

We have to treat the broken ankle first

before we can get back to improving the quality of your performance.

And it's the same way with sleep.

So, if you think you have a sleep disorder,

just go and speak with your doctor.

That's the best piece of advice.

Where do we stand, then,

in all of this conversation about sleep?

Well, I think the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is clear.

We can think of sleep almost like a life-support system.

In fact, some may even call sleep a super power.