**Column 1 / 197 words**

**Sleeping Beauty**

*“Sleep is the golden thread that ties health and our bodies together.”* – Thomas Decker

**The Benefits**

Sleep is an engine extraordinaire and personal off button, all at once. It never rests on its laurels, it’s too busy: **Repairing** your cells, organs, and muscles. **Rebooting** your brain, helping you process and store your experiences, keeping you sharp! **Boosting** your mood. **Transporting** you into wild-groovy-dream land, tapping into your deep unconscious. All this while you’re lying horizontal.

While some fortunate mortals are blessed with 8 hours of peaceful, unbroken sleep, many *still* struggle with deep slumber. For those who sleep eludes, this article will hopefully be helpful.

**Sleep Cycles**

Even super sleepers don’t experience sleep as a long, continuous stretch — more like a series of mini episodes. Throughout the night, your body goes through 4 to 6 sleep cycles lasting around 90 minutes. Each cycle is made up of four stages:

**Stage 1** – Light sleep, drifting in and out of consciousness.

**Stage 2** – Deeper sleep with slower brain waves and muscle relaxation.

**Stage 3** – Deep, restorative sleep for physical healing.

**REM Sleep** – Rapid eye movement and vivid dreams. When we process emotions and memories.

**Column 2 / 201 words**

**Tracking Sleep**

The best way to improve your sleep? Be your own detective. Track your sleep over two weeks and crack the case of sleepless nights, finding a new routine for sweet, uninterrupted slumber.

**Sleep Journal**

While tracking nightly sleep and daily naps can be somewhat annoying,it’s the best way to identify patterns so you can address what’s not working. Keep a journal or pad of paper by your bedside and write down your spells of sleep and waking, and how you feel after each rest.

**Antagonists of Sleep**

For those with chronic pain, an overactive brain, sleep apnea, or prescription meds that make us wired — sleep can be an ongoing challenge. Counting sheep and chamomile tea doesn’t quite cut it for insomniacs. So let’s talk real solutions:

* **Trazodone or Ambien** (by prescription) both work wonders, just don’t take them together.
* **Guided Meditation**
* **Acupuncture & Chinese herbs** - [Lydia Akhzar](https://sfherbalmedicine.com/contact/) treats locally
* **TENS (pain) Therapy** - speak to your doctor
* **Protein** - warm milk or cheese before bed can help settle the brain.

Now that we’ve shared some research, let’s hear from our most relatable, reliable sleep source — your friends at Heritage.

**Column 3 / 201 words**

**Residents on Sleep**

A few words of wizzzdom from our sleep (and insomnia!) pros:

*“Go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time. It takes effort but it works. Also, no heavy meal before retiring. Better not to nap on the bed, only a chair for resting.”* – Betty

*“Val said that if she drinks coffee at night she can't sleep. I said I have the exact opposite problem: If I'm asleep I can't drink coffee.”* – Tom

*“Take Gabapentin.”* – Nancy (Gabapentin is commonly used to treat insomnia, nerve pain, and restless legs syndrome.)

*“Chronic insomnia led me to nightly use of sleeping medication. It helped some but not a lot, so I recently stopped taking it. Two results followed: One was a rebound of daily energy, the pills gave me hangovers. The second change was in my heart. The palpitations I’d experienced while using sleep meds came to abrupt end. I still have insomnia but no heart palpitations and I have more energy than I’ve had in years.” – Doris*

*“The best way to get to sleep is to have a clear conscience.” - Val*

On that note, we wish you a clear conscience and deep, satisfying slumber!