

THE NEW & NOTEWORTHY

PERFECTED TIMING THE EXERCISE-SLEEP CONNECTION

Sorry, but you can't exercise yourself to sleep. In fact, trying to might be keeping you up.

While regular physical activity boosts sleep-promoting brain chemicals and supports recovery, timing, and intensity can make the difference between sweet dreams and a restless night.

Behind The Science: A 2024 analysis reveals the winning combination: moderate cardio, light strength training, and calming practices like yoga. But here's the catch – intense workouts can trigger a surge in stress hormones and raise core basal temperature when your body needs to cool down for sleep. Research shows post-8 PM exercise might cut into sleep time, and that HIIT session an hour before bed? Your elevated heart rate, cortisol levels, and blood pressure could keep you staring at the ceiling.

Finding Balance: If you're already experiencing sleep issues (three or more rough nights weekly for three months),

exercise needs extra attention. More than six intense workouts weekly can disrupt your sleep-wake cycle. And if your job keeps you on your feet all day, that physical demand counts toward your activity total – a factor often overlooked when planning workouts.

Fine-Tune Your Routine: Consider shifting high-intensity sessions to morning or early afternoon. Evening warrior? Experiment with lower-impact alternatives like gentle yoga or pilates. Although longer workouts generally enhance sleep benefits, quality trumps duration in the evening. Monitor your sleep patterns and adjust your training schedule; your optimal timing might surprise you.