

# Eve & Beyond

## The Sleep Protocol

*A Science-Led Wind-Down Checklist for Perimenopause and Menopause*

*If you are lying awake at 2am, overheated and exhausted but unable to switch off, you are not alone. Sleep disruption is one of the most common and most frustrating symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, and it is not a reflection of anything you are doing wrong. As progesterone declines, the calming effect it once had on your nervous system reduces, making it harder to fall asleep and stay there. Estrogen fluctuations trigger night sweats and temperature changes that pull you out of deep sleep. Cortisol patterns shift, leaving many women feeling wired at night and bone tired by morning. The good news is that these changes are well understood, and there are practical, science-backed steps that can make a real difference. Small, consistent changes to your evening routine can meaningfully improve your sleep over time.*

### 3 Hours before bed...

- **Eat your last meal at least 3 hours before sleep** | late eating raises core body temperature and disrupts sleep onset
- **Avoid alcohol** | it fragments sleep architecture and worsens night sweats significantly
- **Limit caffeine after 2pm** | caffeine has a 5–6 hour half life and delays melatonin production
- **Dim the lights in your home** | bright light suppresses melatonin. Use lamps rather than overhead lighting

### 1 Hour before bed...

- **Set your bedroom temperature to 65–68°F (18–20°C)** | the optimal range for hormonal sleep disruption
- **Take a warm shower or bath** | the subsequent drop in body temperature signals sleep onset
- **Put your phone away** | blue light and mental stimulation delay sleep by up to 90 minutes
- **Write down tomorrow's tasks** | offloading mental load reduces the 2–4am cortisol spike
- **Take magnesium glycinate 300–400mg if using** | best taken 30–60 minutes before bed

### At bedtime...

- **Use lightweight breathable bedding** | natural fibres like cotton or bamboo regulate temperature better than synthetics
- **Keep a cool pack or fan within reach** | for night sweats
- **Try 4-7-8 breathing** | inhale for 4 counts, hold for 7, exhale for 8. Repeat 4 times.
- **If you wake between 2–4am do not check your phone** | light exposure makes returning to sleep significantly harder

### Daily habits that improve sleep over time...

- **Morning sunlight within 30 minutes of waking** | anchors your circadian rhythm
- **Resistance exercise 3–4 times per week** | shown to improve sleep quality in perimenopausal women
- **Limit naps to 20 minutes before 3pm** | longer naps reduce sleep pressure at night
- **Track your sleep patterns** | identifying hormonal triggers helps you prepare

*If you have followed these steps consistently for 4 weeks without improvement, speak to a menopause-informed doctor. Sleep disruption in perimenopause can be a sign that hormone therapy or targeted treatment would help significantly.*

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This checklist is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice.