

The Sleep Protocol

A printable field guide for adults whose brain won't switch off — the environment, the schedule, the wind-down, and the troubleshooting script.

The Sleep Protocol

The protocol for sleep when your brain won't switch off.

You used to sleep fine. Now you don't. You've tried magnesium, melatonin, the cold room, the warm shower, the meditation app, the sleep tracker, the blue-light glasses. Your sleep has not improved. You suspect you've made it worse by paying so much attention to it.

This is a thirty-page protocol. No apps. No wearables. No supplements you have to buy. Just five chapters that tell you, on a normal Wednesday evening, exactly what to do — what to change in your environment, when to start winding down, what to do at 3am when you wake up wide awake — to repair your sleep over two weeks.

This is not for you if you have a diagnosed sleep disorder, ongoing insomnia of severe intensity, or sleep apnea. Please see a clinician. This protocol is for the very common adult sleep that *used to work* and stopped — not for clinical insomnia.

This is for you if you can fall asleep on a quiet weekend afternoon but somehow can't at 11pm Tuesday. If you wake at 3am and lie awake calculating things until 5. If you'd like to stop wearing the ring that tells you how badly you slept.

By the end of this protocol you'll have:

- A specific environment your bedroom now is, not "improved sleep hygiene" as a general idea.
- A 90-minute wind-down that fits a normal evening.
- A 3am script for waking in the middle of the night.
- A clear answer to "*what is actually wrong with my sleep?*" — in your own writing.

How to use this book

Read it straight through, in one sitting. About 30 minutes.

Then do the environment audit on the first weekend after reading. Start the wind-down on a Monday evening. Use the 3am script when (not if) you need it.

Try it for two weeks. Then come back, re-read chapter 5, and adjust.

1. Why your sleep stopped working

You used to sleep. Now you don't. At some point — usually mid-30s, often after a stress event, sometimes for no traceable reason — your sleep architecture stopped being automatic and started being something you have to manage.

The standard sleep advice tells you to do four things. Keep the room cold and dark. Avoid screens before bed. Don't drink coffee after 2pm. Maintain consistent sleep and wake times.

Each of those things is fine. None of them is the input that fixes the *new* problem.

The new problem isn't environmental. It's that your nervous system has learned to associate the bed with vigilance. You lie down, the brain interprets stillness as a moment to process the day, and within ninety seconds it's running tomorrow's morning meeting at full volume.

The thing that fixes this isn't another sleep tracker. It's a tighter loop between bed and sleep — and a script for breaking the bed-equals-thinking association.

What this protocol does

This protocol has four layers:

1. **Environment.** Removing the things that cost you sleep without you noticing.
2. **Wind-down.** Building a 90-minute ramp that signals to your nervous system that the day is over.
3. **The 3am script.** A specific protocol for waking in the middle of the night — because the wrong response to 3am wakeups is what turns one bad night into a bad month.
4. **Troubleshooting.** What to do when the protocol doesn't work in week one (it often doesn't).

What this protocol is not

It's not a replacement for CBT-I, the standard clinical intervention for chronic insomnia. If your sleep has been broken for more than six months, or you can't function during the day, please see a sleep specialist. CBT-I works. We're not trying to outdo it.

This protocol is for the *common* version: a previously-fine sleeper whose sleep has degraded in the last six months and who'd like to repair it without buying anything.

Journal prompts (optional — for your own clarity)

1. When did your sleep start being different? What changed around that time?
2. What have you tried? What worked for a week and stopped?
3. What does a "good night" look like for you, in specific minutes and behaviours?

2. The environment audit

The first thing to fix is the room. Not because it's the *most* important — the wind-down and the 3am script matter more — but because the room is the only part of sleep you can fix on a Saturday afternoon, before you do anything cognitively difficult.

Do this with a piece of paper. Walk into your bedroom. Audit each of the following.

The audit checklist

- 1. Temperature.** Is the room between 16°C and 19°C overnight? If you don't know, put a cheap thermometer next to the bed for two nights and find out. Most adult bedrooms are 2–4°C too warm.
- 2. Light.** Stand in the room with the door closed and the lights off. Wait two minutes for your eyes to adjust. Is there any visible light source? Phone charger LED, smoke alarm, alarm clock numbers, streetlight through curtains. Each one of those is a tax on your sleep depth. Cover or remove them.
- 3. Sound.** What's the loudest noise that recurs overnight? Traffic, partner snoring, pipes, neighbour, dog. Identify it. Then decide: earplugs, white noise machine, or fix at source. Don't pretend it's not there.
- 4. Mattress and pillow.** When did you last replace them? If pillow is more than two years old, replace. If mattress shows visible body indent, it's past it.
- 5. The bed and the laptop.** Is your laptop ever in the bed? Is the bed used during the day for anything other than sleep? Both are conditioning the bed for vigilance. From now on, the bed is for sleep and sex. Nothing else.
- 6. The phone.** Where does the phone live overnight? If the answer is "on the nightstand" — that's the first change. Move it across the room, ideally outside the bedroom, on a charger you can hear if there's a genuine emergency.

7. The clock. Can you see the time from bed at 3am? If yes — turn the clock around or remove it. Knowing the time at 3am is what turns wakefulness into anxiety. The 3am script depends on you not being able to check.

What this audit fixes

It fixes the foundation. Not your sleep — that's the next three chapters. The room is the surface you'll be doing the real work on. Get the surface right first.

One rule

Do all the audit fixes in one weekend afternoon. Don't drag it out across two weeks. The protocol won't work if you're still arguing with yourself about whether the streetlight matters.

This is where the preview ends.

You've just read the introduction and the first two chapters.

The full book is available at quietcompounds.com. One-time payment, lifetime updates, 7-day refund.

— Quiet Compound

This is where the preview ends.

The full book is €27. Lifetime updates · 7-day refund · One-time payment.
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