



Tips to Help Nighttime Anxiety

Nighttime anxiety is so real—your brain gets quiet and suddenly *everything* wants your attention. The goal before bed is to signal safety, calm your nervous system, and give your mind a gentle “off-ramp.” Here are some simple, actually-doable ideas you can mix and match:

Calm your mind before your head hits the pillow

- **Brain dump it out** – write down anything swirling in your head (to-dos, worries, random thoughts). Tell yourself, “I’ve parked this for tomorrow.”
- **Set a “worry window” earlier in the evening** – take 10–15 minutes to think through concerns so they don’t show up at bedtime.
- **Limit doom scrolling** – news and social media right before bed tend to spike stress hormones.

Set up a calming pre-sleep routine (consistency matters more than perfection)

- **Dim the lights** 1–2 hours before bed to cue melatonin
- **Warm shower or bath** – helps your body relax and drop into sleep mode
- **Herbal tea** like chamomile, lemon balm, or passionflower
- **Magnesium glycinate** in the evening can be helpful for some people (always check if it’s appropriate for you)

Settle your nervous system (these work surprisingly fast)

- **4-7-8 breathing**: inhale 4 seconds, hold 7, exhale 8 (repeat 4–6 times)
- **Legs up the wall** for 5–10 minutes to shift your body into a parasympathetic (rest) state
- **Progressive muscle relaxation** – gently tense and release each muscle group from toes to head

Make your sleep environment feel safe + cozy

- Keep your room **cool, dark, and quiet**
- Try a **weighted blanket** if you like deep pressure
- Use a **white noise machine or calming audio** (rain sounds, sleep stories, or gentle music)

Give your mind something gentle to focus on

- Read a **light, comforting book** (nothing stimulating)
- Listen to a **guided meditation or body scan**
- Try a **simple mantra** like “I am safe, I can rest”

A few sneaky anxiety triggers to watch for

- Caffeine after early afternoon
- Late intense workouts right before bed
- Alcohol (can make you sleepy initially but worsens nighttime wake-ups and anxiety)

If your mind still starts racing in bed...

- Don’t fight it—**acknowledge the thought and let it pass**
- If you’re awake >20 minutes, get up and do something low-light and boring until you feel sleepy again (this helps your brain keep the bed associated with sleep, not stress)

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