

Building a Realistic Wind Down

Sleep stress and daily rhythms | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Create a short transition toward rest that fits your environment and responsibilities.

A wind down routine is a cue to shift away from the day. It does not guarantee sleep. Choose a short, repeatable sequence that fits your work hours, household, accessibility needs, and preferences rather than an ideal evening you cannot maintain.

Select a few workable actions

Consider preparing one item for tomorrow, lowering stimulation if possible, doing a quiet activity, or changing into comfortable clothing. Pick actions you find settling; a practice that irritates or activates you is not required. Keep the sequence brief enough for a difficult day.

Plan for interruptions

Choose the earliest realistic starting cue, such as finishing a shift or completing caregiving tasks. Identify a shorter version for interrupted evenings. Notice whether the routine feels useful over several attempts. If sleep remains difficult, seek assessment rather than continually adding rules or blaming yourself.

My realistic starting cue and available time are

Two or three actions I want to try in order are

A shorter version for a difficult or interrupted day is

After trying it, I want to keep, change, or discuss