

## February, 2010 The Gift of a Good Night's Sleep

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Give yourself the gift of Good Sleep for Valentine's Day, and Organize your Bedroom For Peace and Haven. Sleep is vitally important. It is restorative for our body and gives our brains time to process the day.

If I told you all the problems that come from bad sleep, it would keep you up at night. As a reformed insomniac, trust me on this. For the purpose of this February newsletter, poor sleep is bad for your Heart, contributing to heart disease, high blood pressure, and increasing the likelihood of strokes and heart attacks.

My hubby is a super hero when it comes to sleeping. Falls asleep immediately, sleeps hard, can wake up before 5 a.m. all week then sleep in until 8 on the weekend with no negative side effects. I'm just jealous, since I sometimes take a long time to fall asleep, sometimes wake during the night (I blame being a mother of small children for many years), and can't sleep in too late on the weekends or it messes up my whole schedule.

On the plus side, I get great sleep these days. The kids are a little older, my bedroom is my haven and I keep my Sleep Hygiene in mind.

So here is what I have learned, in my own pursuit of a good night's sleep and as a Professional Organizer who helps others create a peaceful haven in cluttered bedrooms....

Some things to think about regarding any space in your home:

- Organizers, interior designers, real estate stagers – we would all tell you the same thing: **Any room can only support 3 purposes**, maybe 4, max. So a bedroom? Sleep, love, getting dressed and undressed. You can choose one more, but just one. Reading? TV viewing? Relaxation? Exercise? Limit the uses of a room, and you'll limit the clutter that builds up in there.
- **Don't mix up your bed with other purposes.** This sends the body the wrong message when it is time to sleep, which is why I am no longer sorting clean laundry on my bed!
- **Maintenance is key.** Once your space is organized, and all the clutter is removed, keeping it that way is easier! Take 5 minutes in the morning to make the bed and put away your jammies, and 5 minutes at night to straighten up from the day before you go to bed.

Your Bedroom should be your Haven, your own restful and personal space. Here is what **does belong** in your bedroom:

- Good Sleep Hygiene:
  - Regular schedule:
  - Same bed time and waking every day
  - No more than 1 hour sleeping in on weekend, no matter how tempting.
  - A calming bedtime routine (and no work or arguing or exercise for a few hours before heading to bed)
- Pen/paper, and small Light at bedside to dump nagging thoughts before you go to sleep
- Positive attitude towards sleep. Perspective is difficult at 4 am, but an overall positive attitude towards rest and the occasional sleepless night will do wonders for decreasing your sleep anxiety.
- Clear spaces.
- Make your bed every day
- Close your closet door and your dresser drawers
- Hang up your clothes
- Clear out under your bed
- Quiet beauty. Soothing colors, art and bedding.
- Cool but comfortable temperature
- Clear pathways and a small nightlight for safety (though not if the light interferes with sleeping)
- Have an alarm clock, but keep it turned away, so you don't watch the hours in the middle of the night. I need to move mine away, so I can't stay in bed and hit the snooze!

Here is what **does not belong** in your bedroom:

- Electronics – computers and yes, even Televisions, should not be in your room if you are having trouble sleeping. It is thought that the waves the screens and electronics emit can mess with your sleep.
- Harsh overhead lighting. I don't like it anywhere in my home, but especially not in the bedroom.
- Work to be done / To-Do's: Get Work out of your bedroom. Clear out the computer, yes, and also the pile of bills to pay on your dresser, the bag of cleaning or clothing repairs to go to the Cleaners, that watch to be fixed, etc. Those are Errands to Run or Things to Do, and seeing them before bed may cause you stress and therefore interrupt calming sleep
- Visual Clutter. I have a new client who dreads going in to her room as the crowded dresser top is the first thing she sees when she walks in to her room, the last thing she sees at night and the first thing she sees in the morning. That would give me bad dreams! So we are working on Bedroom As Haven for her.
  - Hang pictures on the wall, instead of on flat surfaces. Clears clutter and makes maintenance (dusting and cleaning up) easier.
- Make room in your bed for sleeping – I have a client who used to clear clutter off half the bed, just enough room to sleep. She was literally sleeping with her clutter. Not good for peaceful rest.
- Dirty laundry. A basket in the hall closet keeps the clutter (and maybe smell!) out of your haven.
  - Have a great month, and Good Night!

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