



Sleep tea

An hour before bed, why not try a herbal tea blend to enhance sleep?

How to make sleep tea

Ideally use loose-leaf herbs for therapeutic doses

Use 1 teaspoon of the herb per cup of water and allow to infuse, with the lid on for 5 minutes

If you create a blend of 3-4 herbs, then use 2 heaped teaspoons of the blend per cup of water

Drink an hour before bed.

If you don't have time to make your own tea blend, I recommend one of my favourite over-the-counter formulas, from the Australian company Love Tea, that combines most of the above herbs. It is also available in a tea bag.

lovetea.com.au/shop

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Try a combination of herbs traditionally used to help reduce stress and tension and facilitate sleep. **Passionflower** (*Passiflora incarnata*) is the herb of choice for helping to aid a restful sleep. The taste of passionflower tea on its own is not that appealing, so combine with some pleasant-tasting relaxing herbs such as **lemon balm** (*Melissa officinalis*), **chamomile** (*Matricaria recutita*) and **lavender** (*Lavandula angustifolia*). **Spearmint** can also be added for taste.

You may like to include **valerian** (*Valeriana officinalis*), as it is one of the most useful relaxing herbs. Unfortunately, it has a characteristic 'dirty sock' smell, so is definitely one to combine with the other pleasant-tasting herbs. A small Iranian study showed that valerian significantly improved the quality of sleep in postmenopausal women.

In another small Iranian study of 100 women aged 50-60 with sleep disorders, a combination of lemon balm and valerian reduced their levels of sleep disorders significantly, compared to the placebo group. Valerian may begin to work after the first dose, although research suggests it works best after several weeks (up to 4 weeks) of regular use.

In a very small number of people, valerian has the opposite effect and is instead stimulating rather than sleep-inducing. If this is the case, choose from other sleep teas.