

The HAG'S Guide

Sleep Helper

Sleep issues are no joke during perimenopause. Sleep deprivation may be at the top of the list of hormonal symptoms wreaking havoc on your peace of mind. You may have tried everything and have resigned yourself to push through and get by with less. It can get pretty bad. But, all is not lost. There are a few places where we can intervene to help ourselves.

Sleep Hygiene

Your Unwinding Ritual

- Lower light exposure a couple of hours before bed. Use low lights and less screen time.
- Keep your room cool and dark. You may want to invest in an eye mask.
- Consistent wake and sleep schedule. It helps with your circadian rhythm.
- Limit caffeine and alcohol. Both substances can disturb your sleep.
- Nighttime workouts can rev up your system if they are too intense.
- If you tend to have a busy mind, have a pen and paper next to your bed and write out what is on your mind. Use this time to dump your to-do list, not brainstorm new ideas. Unload your worries onto paper so they are out of your mind.
- Have an evening ritual that cues your body that it is time to shut down for the evening: light stretching, use some essential oils like lavender for sleep, ditch the screen for a book, journal for a few minutes

When It Doesn't Work

You lie down, and your body turns on. Or, you pass out from exhaustion, only to wake at 3 am fully alert and ready to go. Panic may set in. Your nervous system just kicked into mobilization mode, and your head is racing with thoughts. With a little practice, you can teach your body that it is a false alarm and coax it back to sleep.

Meditation: Turning to Sand

This visualization/meditation connects your mind and body, and moves it toward deep relaxation. Notice if and when you sigh or let out a long exhale during this practice. This is a sign that your nervous system is moving into “rest and digest” mode. Use this first thing when you get into bed, or for those 3 am wake ups to help you fall back to sleep.

- Bring your awareness to the soles of your feet. Imagine your feet are very heavy. Visualize your foot muscles turning to sand and flowing gently away from your bones. Move up to your ankles, imagining the muscles and tendons turning to sand and flowing toward the ground. Your ankle joints loosen and tension releases from both your ankles and feet. Continue this visualization, moving your way up through your calves, thighs, torso, ending at your scalp. Take your time to visualize each of your muscles turning to sand and falling away from your bones. Your body will start to feel very heavy. Keep your mind focused on the visualization; this will keep it clear of other intrusive thoughts.
- If you do not fall asleep the first round, start over again from the beginning. The visualization preoccupies your brain to keep you from dumping more adrenaline and cortisol into your system. This can take time to learn. If it's okay for you, let yourself accept a state of deep rest over full sleep.

Meditation: 20 Conscious Breaths

This is a meditation to use if visualizations do not work for you. Please, do not worry so much about the counting of the breath. Feel the breath; let it be controlled but not forced. The length of the exhale should be longer than the length of the inhale. When we exhale, the vagus nerve attached to our heart's pacemaker slows our heart rate down. This activates the parasympathetic nervous system. By focusing on the feeling of the breath in your nostrils or the movement of your diaphragm, you give your brain somewhere to land and keep the intrusive thoughts at bay. You may use this to help yourself wind down before bed, or for those moments you find yourself wide awake in the middle of the night.

- With your eyes closed, bring your awareness to your breath. When you are ready to begin, place your awareness on your nostrils or your diaphragm. Feel the inhale arriving into your body. You will inhale for the count of 4 and exhale for the count of 6. Adjust the count if you feel you are gasping for air or uncomfortable at any point. Do this for 20 rounds. One round includes one inhale and one exhale.

Disclaimer: Coaching is not therapy, medical advice, or a healthcare service. Coaching does not diagnose, treat, or prevent any mental health or medical condition. Coaching is a collaborative process focused on your present circumstances, future goals, practical action steps, and personal growth. It is not a substitute for therapy, medical care, or mental health treatment. Coaching does not diagnose or treat mental health conditions, trauma, or emotional distress. If your needs fall outside the scope of coaching, I will compassionately support you in finding an appropriate licensed professional.

Contact: info@thehagsguide.com

www.thehagsguide.com