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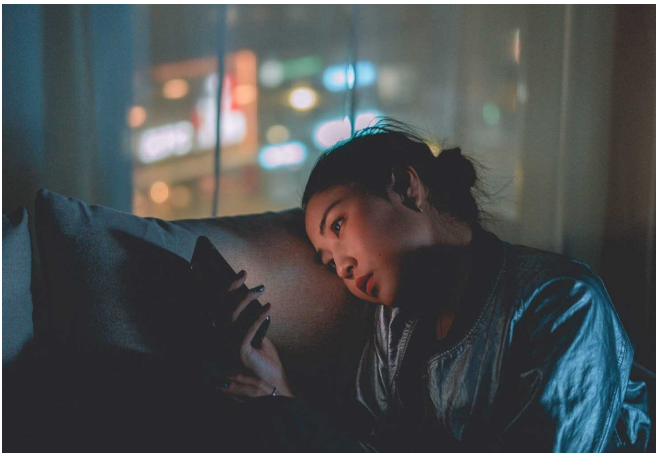
# Are you a victim of Revenge Bedtime? Here's how to control your sleep cycle

If you're sacrificing sleep  
by staying up late, reset  
your circadian rhythm.  
Time to hit the sack!



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I love my sleep. Why then, for most of this year, have I been staying up later and later each night, despite feeling tired, and with nothing really important to do? After a day of working from home I take a late-night [yoga class](#) when I should be snoozing. I decide that midnight will be great time to start a new book (and I've got the [eye-bags](#) to prove it). It's not that I don't want to [sleep](#) — it's more that I don't want to accept that my life has become a cycle of WFH, WFH and some more WFH. As a result, I've fallen victim to the latest sleep trend of Revenge Bedtime.

Sleeping later than when best serves us is no new thing. In 2014, researchers first coined "[bedtime procrastination](#)" as "failing to go to bed at the intended time, while no external circumstances prevent a person from doing so." Revenge Bedtime, however, refers to us shunning our usual [sleep cycle](#) as a bid to get a smidgen of our previous lives back to how they were prior to the pandemic.

"Revenge Bedtime has been perpetuated by the current crisis and the fact that we feel restrained and powerless," confirms Shubhra Venneti Shastry, a sleep expert and consultant at Singapore's [S Family Wellness](#). "As people feel increasingly over- worked while at home, but short on 'me-time', it's a natural



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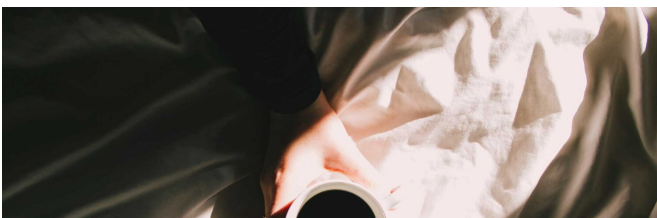
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Indeed, many of us feel that the only free time we have is when we should be sleeping. Says Shubhra, “People need balance and some unstructured time each day away from their job to do low-energy things that essentially ‘fill our cup’ — it’s no surprise that we’re staying up later to achieve this.”

The answer, she says, is to look at your current daily routine. Chances are you’re spending so much time working that you’re forgetting how your body responds to a schedule to set healthy sleeping patterns. “[Studies show](#) that when you don’t take breaks or partake in [regular movement](#), your body will get used to it,” warns Shubhra. “Staying sedentary stops your body’s connection to its [circadian rhythm](#), which means you’ll work longer and stay awake later because you won’t know when to switch off.”

The problem is that Revenge Bedtime is ultimately a form of self-punishment —stealing time from our sleep to counterbalance our “Groundhog Day” existence. Less shut-eye means your immune system can’t regenerate sufficiently; your mood lowers making you susceptible to mental health issues such as [anxiety and depression](#); and you start to lose focus and motivation.

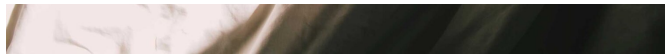
The surest way to combat Revenge Bedtime and get your circadian rhythm back on track is to provide mental and physical stimulation from work *and* play. In short, you need to reclaim your days again. Here, Shubhra reveals how:





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## Tips to beat Revenge Bedtime

- Force yourself to take breaks and go outside during the working day. Aim for a few 20-minute minimum walks. Even if you just stroll around the block, you'll be connecting with your body's circadian rhythm and setting yourself up for a better night's rest
- Get exercising at home at regular intervals with [The Body Coach](#). Joe Wicks does excellent short bursts of exercises on YouTube ranging from 5 Minute Moves to [10 Minute Cardio and Abs](#) workouts
- For a quick burst of movement, try a yoga move that includes an inversion. Experienced yogis can try Downward Facing Dog, Dolphin Pose or Supported Shoulder Stand. Not only will you receive a rush of energy, but potential short-term relief from back pain, sciatica and scoliosis. (Please don't try at home if you're inexperienced)
- [Drink enough water](#) throughout the day and eat at regular times. Set reminders on your phone and stick to them. Irregular or missed meals will cause your body to crave sugar or caffeine which will keep you alert long into the night
- Still staring at your work screen long after sunset? Book into an online course, meet a friend or set up a Zoom call with family so you physically remove yourself from your screen and start your evening
- Prep your body for sleep with a bedtime routine. The moment you stop work, your



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permission in the evening to have a long bath,  
indulge in a hobby, or unwind with  
meditation

- Be true to yourself: do you really need to open that bottle of wine past 10pm? Is the middle of the night the best time to start baking cakes? Will *The Crown* still be on Netflix tomorrow if you don't complete the series before sunrise?

Sometimes, you have to put honesty and your health first (for a few nights, at least).

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