



#561 5 Types of Insomnia: How to Fix Your Sleep Problems and Get Better Sleep Fast with Dr. Damiana Corca

Dr. Wendy Myers

Hello, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. On the show today, we're going to be talking about sleep and the top strategies to improve your sleep. I know this is something that so many people struggle with. I'm always looking to up my sleep game, just every way I can. I'm always experimenting with different things and how I can improve. It just seems to be like never ending. So, we're going to have a lot of tips on the show for you today. We're going to talk about the five types of insomnia. We're going to be talking about the top things that disrupt your sleep and how to have better sleep hygiene. We're going to be talking about how your blood sugar levels, and how your stress levels and your hormone levels dramatically impact your sleep. We're going to be talking about the top sleep supplements that you can take, touch on melatonin and some issues around that. It's just really good info for you today on the show.

Our guest today is Dr. Damiana Corca. She's a doctor of acupuncture and Chinese medicine, as well as a certified functional medicine practitioner specializing in sleep disorders. The unique replenishing sleep framework that she shared in her new book, *Deep Blue Sleep*, is the culmination of thousands of sleep healing sessions for more than a decade in her clinical practice. She brings a fresh and realistic perspective to patient care with her intercultural experiences and passion for learning in various

areas of study. She shares her compassionate connection and understanding for the diverse lifestyles and backgrounds of her patients and readers. You can learn more about her work and work with her personally at damianacorca.com. Damiana, thank you so much for joining the show.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Thank you for having me.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Why don't you tell us a little bit about your sleep and your new book?

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yes, I've been specializing and supporting people with sleep issues for the past, I think it's 15 years now, and then recently I just published a book on how to sleep well naturally.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Can you tell us the name of that book?

Dr. Damiana Corca

The Deep Blue Sleep.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Okay. Great. Let's get into that because sleep is such a difficult issue for so many people today. Can you give us some insight and some statistics on how many people are not getting enough sleep? I know most people are getting like five hours of sleep a night, which is crazy. It's really incomprehensible.

Dr. Damiana Corca

It is. Some people choose not to sleep because they're busy. I say choose because I see a lot of the people who want to sleep and can't sleep. That's what I mean by choose. A lot of people just get four or five, six hours of sleep because of their busy

lives. And then there is the other side of people wanting to sleep, but they can't fall asleep. They can't stay asleep, but also they get less sleep when in fact, we need seven and a half to nine hours depending on each person.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, and especially women that are in perimenopause and menopause, they need even more sleep. I read another interesting statistic that women need more sleep than men, just because we use our brains more. We're more complex. Hormonally, we use it a lot. We use more energy just to do all the mental work that we're doing all the time, but for many reasons we need more sleep.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, and we multitask a lot and that takes more brain energy and then having kids around and typically women can and more of the caregivers wake up more frequently at nights and that has a big effect on our sleep.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, and definitely, as a business owner, me too. My brain just goes 24-seven about what I have to do, and that can put a damper on sleeping as well. You have a lot of responsibilities. Let's define, what is good sleep exactly? What should people be aiming for? There are a lot of layers of complexity to this because just because your eyes are closed doesn't mean you're getting it. Just because your eyes are closed for eight hours doesn't mean you're getting eight hours of sleep. Tell us about what good sleep should look like.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Falling asleep within 10 to 20 minutes, an interesting fact is that if you fall asleep as soon as you hit the pillow, you're likely sleep-deprived if you fall asleep that easily and that fast. If it takes longer than half an hour to fall asleep, then you have trouble falling asleep. Once you fall asleep, sleeping through the night is ideal. But, if you wake up to go to the bathroom or wake up briefly and go back to sleep, that's fine. You're accumulating about seven and a half to nine hours, and that can differ from person to person. As you said, some people need more than others, but definitely, at

least seven and a half. The people that say they get six hours of sleep and they're fine, most of the time they're in such a hyperactive mode. They don't realize how stressed they are and how actually they need more sleep and then waking up in the morning, feeling rested, rejuvenated. It's okay if you want some coffee because you enjoy it, but you shouldn't need it. You should be awake enough to feel like you're ready for the day. So, that's a very important piece and not only in the morning, but how you feel throughout the day. Also in the afternoon, we tend to have a little bit of a dip in energy. That's also normal. But if you're so tired that you need to take a nap, or you need to have some caffeine, then likely you're not resting well enough, not long enough, not deep enough. So, there is more to that, but that's basically the basics of good sleep.

Dr. Wendy Myers

But it's okay to take a nap too

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yes. I love naps.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, but you should be able to get through your day typically. But if you don't, I know for me, I definitely, I take naps here and there. It's hard for me to do that, but occasionally I make sure I listen to my body and if I need a nap, I take one and I'm just trying to push through and put caffeine away, which is very tempting for people.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Some days are very demanding. Even with people who have insomnia, I recommend naps, even though it's a controversial kind of subject because when you interrupt that stress response during the day, the body feels like it's safe. If you think about it, if you're in a dangerous situation, the thing that you're not going to do is lie down and take a nap. So by doing that and taking a 20 minute break in the middle of the day, the body gets the message that everything is okay. Then you'll feel much better in the afternoon.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, that's amazing. Even a five-minute nap can make a huge difference. It doesn't have to be a ton. So, let's talk about the end you talk about in your book, the top five types of insomnia, which I thought was really interesting. Let's go over that because I know in my research, there's 14 different things that can disrupt sleep. There is a lot to this and there's a lot of troubleshooting that people need to do to get down to the root cause of why they're not sleeping that well, but let's start with that, the five types of insomnia.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, these are the five types that I found to be the most common in my clinical experience. The first one is the anxious type. They show up with trouble falling asleep. It takes an hour or two to fall asleep. Most of these people will try to read a book and it helps, but you need to be with it there sometimes for an hour or two until finally the person feels sleepy and then goes to sleep. It does come with anxiety and it does come with higher cortisol levels usually in the evening and a lot of stress can show up in both women and men. It can build up gradually, but also a big stressor can make it happen pretty fast. So that's trouble falling asleep. And then the overthinking type shows up with waking up in the middle of the night like the 1 a.m. awakening wide awake. Usually, the root cause it's the two most common things are either digestion and perimenopause and menopause in hot flashes. Those are the two most common and they're actually quite commonly related to the overthinking type.

There is a subtype to that, but I'm going to try to keep it simple here. It's when you can't fall asleep and you feel like you're in a light sleep all night long. It's very disturbing when that happens. Most people recognize that they do sleep, but it just feels like it's such a low quality. Then we have the overtax type that's waking up too early. The time is around three, sometimes it can be four, four thirty-five. It's half an hour, an hour, two hours, three hours earlier than the usual type. That's usually caused also by an activated stress response and it's just the society where we keep going and going and going and we push ourselves a lot and collapse in the evening, we fall asleep and then we wake up too early, kind of that active mind, tired, but also so active and we're troubleshooting throughout what's happening the next day. So,

that's the overtax type, just kind of our society at large. I would say that's more common in men. I see it in women too, but more so in men. Then we have the depleted type that tends to show up in 60s, 70s, 80s, people wake up too early, again, older people typically, depleted hormones, neurotransmitters, they just feel like they're done with sleep and it doesn't matter which time, what time they go to sleep. They just always tend to wake up after four or five hours. It's an exact time, which for the previous type, the overtax type, is a little bit different. If they shift their time, they still wake up at the same time.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And is that because maybe older people aren't doing as much regeneration, maybe don't need as much sleep?

Dr. Damiana Corca

Perhaps I think we need the sleep so much because for dementia prevention, it's just everything is a little lower. The sex hormones, the newer transmitters, and so we need it and we don't get as much of it. So, replenishing those newer transmitters and hormones and eating really well, then maybe taking digestive enzymes so we can digest the food a little better and absorb the nutrients, those are kind of the strategies that I take with older individuals. The overburden type, I feel that's the one that applies the most. It can show up in all different types with heavy metal toxicity and all kinds of issues with toxins. It shows up with a person feeling like they sleep. They feel like they're being pulled out of sleep. It doesn't make any sense. I would say it's the least responsive to even supplements, if they're not the right supplements, just trying to take some melatonin or trying to take some valerian or, I don't know, anything that may help for the other types and this type doesn't help because there is an irritation. There is something that the body needs to get rid of that's there. So, until we uncover what that is, whether it's mold or heavy metal toxicity or a chronic infection in the gut, people tend to not improve. Even with medication, I would say it's the most resistant to support from medication.

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For anyone listening that really wants to detox their body, go to heavymetalsquiz.com. I created a quiz for you. It only takes a couple of seconds and it's based on some lifestyle questions. You can get your toxicity score and get a free video series that answers all of your frequently asked questions about how to detox your body. Check it out at heavymetalsquiz.com.

Dr. Wendy Myers

In my opinion, I think it's really important for people to do testing of their sleep and their sleep habits, their deep sleep, and REM sleep with an aura ring. There are really inexpensive sleep studies that you can do now. I had a dentist recommend a little, it's like a 175-sleep kit to see how many times you're waking up during the night and it's great. Just wear it like a little sensor.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah. I used to have to go to a clinic and sleep. It's so much easier nowadays to make sure you don't have sleep apnea and oxygen saturation is at a good level, above 92 to 93 percent all night long. So yeah, there are all kinds of root causes. We used to think, well, if you just prepare for bed. That works for some people, but for some it doesn't because it's so complex. There's so many different facets from toxicity to hormones to digestion, but ultimately it gets down to the body not feeling safe to stay asleep or not having what it needs to stay asleep or having too much of something like a heavy metal that keeps irritating the nervous system.

Dr. Wendy Myers

For anyone, even if you think you sleep good or it's still important to check for sleep apnea and do testing as well, just to see where you're at, check in because I think I see a lot of people say in their 40s, 50s, 60s are not really thinking about sleep, which is the most foundational thing for your health. And so they may have decades of poor sleep and it really catches up with you later in life, shortens your life, causes immune issues, just so many different health issues. So, it's smart to do testing now, even if you think you don't have an issue or if you have a minor issue. You just can't get enough sleep. You want to do some testing and then also use that as a baseline to see what's working.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Definitely. And as you said, even devices like the Oura Ring, they're getting better and better and they look at oxygen. It's not a sleep apnea test, that's for sure, but it can kind of hint towards, oh, maybe there is a problem there. My sleep is interrupted a lot and it says that I have some oxygen saturation drops. Whether that means you have sleep apnea or not, that's a different story, but these new devices are amazing.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, especially if you snore or your husband snores, get a sleep apnea test. You have to do that because like my father, he finally got around to doing a test in his sixties and he woke up 70 times a night. And so, not surprisingly, he was dead at 68 because it just destroys your heart and destroys brain cells. You're not going to have good outcomes if you have undiagnosed sleep apnea.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Some people snore, some people don't. That's the thing. Some people gasp for air or it depends if you sleep with someone in the same bed or not. Some people sleep through the night and they have no idea. They might feel a little tired, but maybe they're highly functional and don't really think about it much. Some people wake up too early around 2, 3 a. m. and can't go back to sleep. Something is wrong. That's one common thing that shows up with sleep apnea. When I see that, I ask other questions and see if that's the case. Doing a sleep study is advised, and it used to be that if you're overweight, go ahead and do a sleep study, but that's not the case anymore. Most of my patients look great, they're fit, great BMI, and yet the neck muscle, the tongue muscles are weaker. There is inflammation, and then sleep apnea develops.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, let's talk about hormones because so many people today have hormone issues and many don't know it. There's a lot of things working against your hormones. So, what hormones are optimal for aiding sleep?

Dr. Damiana Corca

Oh, hormonal balance, the progesterone and estrogen balance is so important. The most common thing that I see for women in their 20s and 30s is being on birth control and they don't ovulate. I've had a few patients who could not figure out their sleep problems until they got off birth control and were able to get those normal fluctuations throughout the month. Now, as we enter perimenopause, which can be very long, up to 12 years, but on average about seven years, somewhere in the late 30s, early 40s, a lot of women, as that transition happens, which again is very gradual towards menopause, we see hormonal changes. A lot of the time, not enough, estrogen or progesterone or too much estrogen and not enough progesterone and that ratio can cause a lot of sleep problems, especially the one week or two weeks before we start our menstrual cycle, before bleeding. So, it's very complex. It all shows up in a lot of women in their forties and fifties, but forties, it's really the main age range for women and, and possibly earlier. And with that, there is a lot of hormonal testing that we can do somewhat home to mirror care.

It's amazing the amount of data we can collect nowadays, but then there are other medical tests that are done either throughout the month, throughout an entire month, like the Dutch test or five to seven days after ovulation to really gather data and see what exactly it's happening. Supplements can be as simple as we need to support your progesterone a little more and we use Vitex. It can be as simple as that, or let's help with estrogen detox a little more. And so, there are ways to do that and gathering data, it's very helpful, but sometimes symptoms give us the clinical picture of what's happening and doing some acupuncture or some herbs, making some lifestyle changes and really listening to our bodies throughout the month and not again, pushing ourselves so much.

Dr. Wendy Myers

When I was having sleep issues, maybe started maybe 15 years ago or so, and I just tried every supplement, every sleeping pill, just all kinds of different things, taking more magnesium. I just said low progesterone, and I suspected, and I wish I had tested. I'm 52 now, but I wish I had tested my hormones well over a decade ago just to check that out because just taking progesterone has completely revolutionized my sleep. I started doing a little progesterone cream, five or 10 milligrams, but it didn't do anything. I put that to the wayside like, oh, that must not be it but I actually have

to take 400 milligrams of progesterone. That's what works for me and it's just a very high amount, but that progesterone makes GABA, which turns off the cortisol and the stress hormones. It's the break. So we need that GABA.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, that's the connection with the neurotransmitters, and then on the other side, estrogen helps make serotonin, which is also one of the main calming neurotransmitters and also one of the neurotransmitters that helps us with our mood.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, and you don't have to be in perimenopause or menopause to need progesterone because I think that's true. We're very estrogenized with all the plastics and the phthalates, and there's so many estrogen substances running through our body. It's very likely you may need some progesterone to counter that until you can take care of that underlying root issue. What's causing that?

Dr. Damiana Corca

We don't need to wait until we're in perimenopause. That's why I think partially why younger women in their 20s and 30s who are on birth control because they never ovulate, and as you said, we build up estrogen through the environment and the foods and the face creams, the various things that were exposed to this. It causes an imbalance.

Dr. Wendy Myers

So do you think women are on birth control or hormonal types of birth control shouldn't be looking into taking some progesterone or testing for progesterone just to counterbalance that?

Dr. Damiana Corca

Well, it really depends what kind of birth control they're using. It's a little more complicated than that because they usually do in combination with estrogen.

Sometimes they don't so it's a little bit more complicated and it's tricky because you don't really know what is happening and testing really doesn't help because we're trying to make sure they're not having babies. If it's a problem, they can't sleep, getting off birth control, finding other ways for birth control so they don't get pregnant and then thinking, there are natural ways, it's just paying more attention to the body for sure.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, you just need a very skilled practitioner like yourself and to troubleshoot these things.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, and to explain like in my book, I explain how to take the temperature, how to look for the vaginal discharge. They're really there. Once you understand over a couple of months what's happening with your body, if the menstrual cycle is regular, then it's very easy to find that 5, 6, 7 days at the most window when you're actually fertile. Then you can avoid that.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Do you talk about EMF in your book at all? I know that's a big thing that the EMF, like the wifi computers, your cell phone sitting next to your bed et cetera, could really interfere in your brain waves and dramatically affect the quality of your sleep.

Dr. Damiana Corca

I do a little bit and there's some people that seem to be more susceptible. They seem to have a genetic variant related to calcium channels because some of us seem overall fine. Maybe all of us are affected to a certain level, but not enough to produce health issues.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I know for many people that have sleep issues, you gotta look at the EMF, look at the EMF in your environment, your bedroom, your wifi router, et cetera because those non-native frequencies come in and they will disrupt your brainwaves.

Dr. Damiana Corca

You can do something as simple as putting a timer on the wifi from 10:30, 11 PM to six or seven AM so it turns off and turns back on automatically. If you live in an apartment, you're going to get exposure from the neighbors, but do your best with that. The other thing that I talk to some of my patients, we get so afraid of everything around us that that in itself can create anxiety and hyperarousal of the nervous system. We have to remember that we're people. We've been on this planet for a long time. We're resilient. It's the power of the mind and telling us, oh, that's bad for me. This is bad for me. That's bad for me. I wrote a book about all of this. So obviously I believe these things are affecting us, but also watching the stories that we tell in our heads every day because it can become so heartbreaking and overwhelming, feeling like we have to protect ourselves all the time. We never feel safe and safety is so important for sleeping well and letting go.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, that's why you guys are listening to this podcast. There are so many things you can do to troubleshoot what's going on with you. You have solutions. Let's talk about the most common sleep hygiene habits people need to have, because I know for me, knowing what I know about sleep, I structure my day, my whole day to set myself up for a good sleep in the evening. It's not just what you're doing like an hour or two before bed. Can you go over some of your top hygiene habits?

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yes, you are so correct. I call it a 24-hour business. Sleeping well starts the moment you wake up because there are things that you can do throughout the day that will affect the sleep either positively or negatively. So, in the morning, the three most important things that I think will affect your sleep at night in a positive way is to make sure that you have enough protein, 20 to 25 grams of protein in the morning for breakfast, especially for women. I know there is a whole world that loves intermittent

fasting, and I think it can be very beneficial. But, when you struggle with sleep, and especially for women, I would say eating in the morning a good protein-containing meal is very important. The second thing is to do a little bit of physical movement and it doesn't have to be a lot, even 10 to 20 minutes can be helpful to just help your body wake up naturally. The third thing is being exposed to light, uh, whether you have a light lamp that 10,000 lux that kind of mimics the sun for 20 minutes in the morning, or just going outside for a little walk, that's super important. Let's make it a full day into the evening.

Caffeine, I know some people say it's fine if they drink caffeine by noon or even 3 p. m. My cutoff time is 10 p. m. Also to remember that some people don't tolerate any caffeine at all. They get very wired and so that's something to consider. But if you do drink caffeine, cutting it at about 10:00 AM I'd say that's a good time. And then, let's see. I love naps, just like you said, you do too. In fact, a lot of my patients who struggle with insomnia, I told them if the nap is done correctly and at the right time and not too long, it can actually help the sleep again, because it instilled that sense of peace and relaxation throughout the nervous system. We have a natural dip in body core temperature, which makes us feel a little sleepy and also a tiny bit of melatonin being produced in the afternoon or the afternoon. So, we're naturally made to take siestas. We just don't do it. So, the idea is to take this rest. I call it a rest because it's okay if you don't fall asleep and you're just lying down.

You don't have to fall asleep actually. It's still beneficial, but it has to be at least seven, eight hours before your bedtime and no longer than half an hour. Put a timer on, just get in bed, get cozy, listen to a guided meditation, whether you fall asleep or not. It's still helpful, but most people, after they do it, after a while, they do say they doze off for a couple of minutes or five minutes or 10 minutes within that 20-to-30-minute period. They're really wonderful. You feel like a different person when you do that, literally, and the afternoon is so much better. Then, as we step into the evening, one of my big things, if you feel like you overthink a lot and you have a lot on your mind around 5 p. m, start writing down things that are in your mind and make a dump list, like just a brain dump as they call it to just let go of everything. A lot of people, what they do when they wake up in the middle of the night or when they can't fall asleep, they start ruminating and just keep thinking about the same thing over and over again. So, if you've written all the things on that piece of paper, then you can just tell

your mind like it's on that piece of paper. I'll deal with it tomorrow, whether it's something that's solvable or not, because some things are longer term issues that we don't really have a solution for.

It's good to reassure the mind that we got it and there is nothing really that we can do overnight. Stepping into the evening, around 6, 7 p. m. or two, three hours before bedtime. Three hours is better than two, but two is fine for most people. Let's see what else. Then there is that winding down hour before bedtime. That's really important. Getting ready for bed at the top of the hour. So, at the beginning of the hour, make sure everything is ready, brush teeth, prepare the bed, whatever you do before bedtime. And then, maybe do a short meditation. I usually recommend meditating earlier in the evening rather than way before bedtime, because while it can be relaxing, it can also stir up all the things in our mind. So, if we meditate a little earlier, even 1 hour earlier for 10, 15 minutes, then you have time to just kind of further process. You don't start processing when you're lying in bed and then reading. I'm a big fan of fiction books, just activating a different part of the brain. Listening to a podcast, listening to a guided meditation, watching TV. I think it's fine as long as you allow about an hour, so we're not exposed to the screens. It's not only the blue light, but also it's the activation that comes towards us.

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Dr. Wendy Myers

Social media is very stimulating. I've just had to say no, I can't do it. I want to do it. It's so addicting but it's so social media and the scrolling is very stimulating. You have the blue light. It's just really waking you up. It's like the worst thing you could possibly do. You gotta shut that off a couple hours before bed. I just had to say no more. Just say no. That's just social media. Just no

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah. It's highly addictive, we process a lot because it's fast moving. And then we compare ourselves sometimes and we start thinking about the things that we should be doing and it's, oh, it's just no social media, period, at least an hour, if not longer. It can really make a huge difference for some people. Now, if you wake up in the middle of the night, obviously getting long term care is helpful, but also listening to a podcast or it can really vary from person to person. Some people say, well, no, a podcast is too activating for my brain. That doesn't work for me, but listening to waves or some music is helpful. And for some people, they say, I do need some words. I do need to listen to something to engage the mind and focus, and then I doze back off. What's nice about listening to something is you can keep the light off. Some people really say it's helpful to read a book for a little while, and then they get really sleepy and they go back to sleep. A very important thing to remember in the middle of the night is that whatever the reason is that we woke up. Usually, there is a cortisol spike, for most people, and once we get that cortisol produced in the middle of the night, it can take an hour to two hours to clear out of our body. This is a survival helpful mechanism if truly there was a danger, but if it was not, if it was a blood sugar dip, or hormonal imbalance or something else that's waking us up.

It's not really dangerous, but the body doesn't know. It still acts as if there is a wild animal right there and you have to watch out for yourself and for your family. So it's very helpful in that case not to go back for an hour or two and to keep you awake. Why it's important to remember that until finding more long-term solutions is that a lot of us stress a lot. If half an hour passes and we get more agitated, we produce more stress hormones. So, it's really good to remember that it's okay. I'll go back to sleep eventually. I'll deal with this tomorrow. It might be a harder day. I might need to cancel some things, but try not to spiral out of control because it just makes it worse.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, I used to wake up and I knew I'd wake up in the middle of the night. I would get really angry because I knew this is like years ago, but I knew I'm not going back to sleep for a couple of hours. It would just make me get so mad.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, it makes it worse. And also some of us think, oh, what is wrong with me? Why can't I just go back to sleep? Why am I not like other people? It's not helpful. It's best to again, read the book, listen to something and just as much as possible until finding other solutions to embrace that quiet time in the middle of the night.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Now I have some tools ready to go if I wake up. I have meditation music and I'll put it on a YouTube playlist that's already downloaded. I can put on some headphones and listen to that and just meditate or pray. I definitely pray before I go to bed so I don't think about my day and go through the day and the stress blah blah. I pray for a good sleep. I pray I have enough time in my day to do everything I want to accomplish. I pray for two hours of REM sleep and two hours of deep sleep, very specific things I ask for and just to pray for other people. It's a really much better way to focus your brain, a better practice than running through all your problems and all this and all the stress that's going to create in your brain or what it is that you want to create.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, and it's an intention and it's not a lot of pressure, especially if it comes in the form of prayer. I think last night something was on my mind quite a bit and I was feeling a little discouraged. I use insight timer a lot and I literally put a prayer on it because sometimes it's so helpful to just let someone take you on a journey. So, having a playlist, like you said, on YouTube or using an app such as insight timer and having those meditations that you love saved is good so you don't have to think and try to troubleshoot in the middle of the night like, what are you going to do now?

Dr. Wendy Myers

Or you can take supplements to just knock yourself out. So, let's talk a little bit about that. I'll tell you about some things that I've tried that work, but there's a lot of stuff out there. I bought one sleep patch on Instagram and I've got a thousand sleep ads. I'm like, wow, there's really a lot of products out there. So let's talk about what are the top supplements for sleep where people should start kind of what everyone needs and maybe some other tips there

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, that is such a tricky question because in my practice everyone comes and sees me in person and when I wrote the book, I tried to summarize what are the things that really work and I rely on testing a lot and so it's always tricky, like, what should we start with? Magnesium, as you mentioned earlier, is always an easy one because a lot of us, this is a mineral that's depleted in the soil, and so we don't get as much of it. It's very safe to take. Magnesium glycinate helps with anxiety and sleep. Threonate is supposed to cross the blood brain barrier a lot more. It can be more helpful for sleep. So that's something that has no side effects except if you take too much, you'll notice loose stools in which case you just back up a little bit and you should be fine. I'll address melatonin because a lot of people ask me about this and I would say it can be helpful. It's just that a lot of us are not deficient in melatonin and that's now why we can't sleep. If you take it and it helps, then it's great. I used to say it's just good for when you're trying to adjust to different time zones or for jet lag, but it seems like it either helps or it doesn't. If it does, taking a small amount, anywhere from one to three milligrams seems to be helpful for most people. Liposomal liquid form is better than taking capsules or tablets or gel caps. That's what I have found. I'm not sure if I can say a brand name.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Oh, yeah, for sure. I'm not invested in it.

Dr. Damiana Corca

I really love Quicksilver Scientific, their liposomal, I think they have one milligram and four milligrams. For my patients, I always tell them, take the one milligram, just try that. You can stagger it a little bit, like you can do some an hour before bedtime and some right before bedtime. That seems to be very helpful, again, if that's what the body needs. I think a lot of people say, well, melatonin doesn't work. I'm like, no, it doesn't work for you because that's not what you need.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Or they took the wrong form. They took a pill when you actually need the liposomal melatonin to absorb sublingually. You need it to absorb under your tongue and that's what it's going to work for you. But some people get really groggy the next day. Melatonin can facilitate detoxification. That can be a sign that maybe you need detoxification. Some people take too much melatonin and too much of it. You've got to find that right amount

Dr. Damiana Corca

And that's why I like the liquid and because you can increase or decrease in small increments. Some people get vivid dreams from melatonin. It's not that common, but it can happen. You can feel like it kind of activates the pineal gland in a sense. It's a wonderful thing, but also not because the dreams can feel very disturbing and you don't know what to do with that. Then it disturbs sleep instead of helping you sleep better. Let's see, what else do I find myself, whether it's usually based on testing, but I commonly find myself choosing some kind of adrenal support, whether it's adrenal support in the morning, like adaptogens, like rhodiola and ashwagandha and holy basil. I'm taking that in the morning. And for some people, if we do testing, we realize they need glandulars because they need more support. Over a few months, we do the glandulars along with B vitamins. I find it very commonly to be helpful and it's usually because we do a saliva cortisol testing over 24 hours and it tells us that's what they need.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Generally, adaptogenic herbs are very safe. Most people who are stressed today are going to have cortisol issues more often than not, so it's safe to just try those and see which one works for you. Some of them don't work for some people and so it's good to just try different things and see what works for you.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, and I tell people to just use a combination of herbs rather than a single herb. It's more likely that it's going to be helpful. They kind of work together. There are a lot of formulas out there. In the evening I find myself in my practice, I guess, based on testing using phosphatidylserine a lot to lower cortisol at night. As I say in my book

too, I usually don't recommend it unless I have a test in front of me, because if the overall cortisol output is low, then it can make the insomnia worse. What happens is if you lower the cortisol too much, cortisol is closely related to blood sugar balance, and we need a certain amount of sugar for our brain. If it dips too low in the middle of the night, then we wake up kind of agitated because the body needs to produce more to make more sugar available to keep the energy steady for the brain. It's tricky, but most people do really well with 100 milligrams of phosphatidyl. I use that and sometimes higher. It usually is okay for most people. I don't know how, if you use the supplement commonly in your practice or not for sleep issues, but I find it quite helpful overall.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, I recommend CBD to people. I love CBD because everyone is different and it's not always available, but I do a thousand plus milligrams a night. I do CBD and CBN. And man, my overthinking brain just turns that tap right off. And it's also great at managing stress. It's just unbelievable how much that's changed my sleep.

Dr. Damiana Corca

I agree. CBD plus CBN, you're correct. It's really helpful for sleep. I just haven't figured out if over long-term tapering off, if it does the job, like with phosphatidate. Serine, I find that eventually the body doesn't need that, especially along with adaptogenic herbs. It's possible that I just didn't look through that lens to watch a few patients. What happens if we just use that over the long term? Does it get resolved gradually? And with chronic sleep issues is rarely just one thing. It's usually a combination of root causes. If you just have occasional sleep issues or you just want to improve sleep or you find yourself stressed and overthinking, CBD plus CBN is a wonderful choice.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, that's been so helpful for me. Dr. Andrew Huberman talks about how he loves magnesium threonate. He loves apigenin. He loves theanine as well, which is kind of what you get in green tea. It relaxes you. There's passion flower and valerian and there's so many different things that you can try. You just have to see what works for you.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Definitely. Yeah.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I'm a big proponent of repleting minerals throughout your day because if you don't have adequate mineral levels, not just magnesium, but all of them, your body is going to be in a state of stress. Just by default, you've got to replenish your minerals, and I do that by putting sea salt in all of my water I drink, and just taking minerals throughout the day, the macrominerals, magnesium, calcium, zinc, potassium, and things like that.

Dr. Damiana Corca

That's very important, just having those basic nutrients. It's very helpful for the body. The rest of the supplements, it just really depends. Is there a hormonal issue? Is there digestive trouble and a need for healing the gut? Some of the newer transmitters like serotonin, 95 percent of it is produced in the gut and it feeds into the beneficial bacteria as they're transmitted. There's a lot there, and when I say digestion, people tell me, well, I don't know. I don't have a lot of symptoms. I don't feel like my stomach bothers me at night. When we say that digestion causes sleep issues. It's not that you have symptoms in the middle of the night. It can happen with acid reflux for some people, but that's a small percentage. It's the overall gut health and how it helps with producing serotonin and how inflammation can increase cortisol production. It's the bigger picture. In Chinese medicine, when we think about digestion, we think about digesting thoughts and digesting food. So, if you have trouble with overthinking and ruminating and spiraling out of control, likely digestion needs to be addressed.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, or liver too.

Dr. Damiana Corca

And liver too, yes

Dr. Wendy Myers

Can you talk about liver health? I think there's a lot of people waking up between one and three because their liver is just overwhelmed, overloaded, bad diet, industrial seed oils, there's just so much working against the liver. What can people do to love their liver so that it can help them to sleep better?

Dr. Damiana Corca

One of the first things that they can do is to make sure they're in bed before 10 PM or around 10 PM because that puts us in a different place for the liver to start detoxing. Drinking very little or not at all it's a big one because the liver perceives alcohol as a toxin. So, we'll put everything aside and detox the alcohol first. If you drink night after night, even if it's just one drink, but you drink every single night, it never prioritizes food as a first thing to do in the middle of the night. It's always the alcohol. I tell people, if you choose to drink, drink no more than one to two drinks per night, and give at least three, four days a week of a break. Then the body can prioritize detoxing from all these environmental toxins, from, as you said, seed oils, whatever it is that just kind of overburden us. And also hormones. Our liver needs to deal with that and estrogen and such. Those are two main things and easy things that we can do. Well, with alcohol, it can be easy and sometimes it's not, I suppose. They're very easy detoxes that we can do doing those 30 day detoxes, like the whole 30 or in functional medicine, we do the elimination diet. That's very helpful when we eliminate the foods that it's not so much. Sometimes what we eliminate is the fact that we eat a more wholesome diet.

When we eliminate dairy products and eggs and gluten containing products and, um, What am I missing? Eggs, sugar, alcohol, caffeine, you eat a whole lot healthier and that can support liver detox. I also recommend to my patients once a year at the very least, if not every season, to do a gentle detox, especially in spring. I, again, do Quicksilver Scientific quite a bit. They have a liver sauce that most people hate, but my patients weirdly like it.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, I love that liver sauce.

Dr. Damiana Corca

So good. People are like, liver sauce? Yes, liver sauce.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, that's my quick summer scientific. They have amazing detox products. For sure. They do. We have them in our store, too.

Dr. Damiana Corca

They do and you can do that with a binder. If you notice that when you do a liver detox, you feel worse, you probably need a binder to catch some of those toxins and eliminate it. They actually have a, I don't know, what is it called? Push and catch? Or catch and push? Push and catch, I suppose. It's like the kit that they do to get there. And so there are a lot of different strategies where we can support the liver detox.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You mentioned blood sugar issues that dipping really low can cause a cortisol spike, making us wake up. Can you talk a little bit about food timing and the foods we shouldn't eat, like high sugar foods near bed or in the middle of the night if we wake up?

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah, low blood sugar or high blood sugar will cause sleep issues in different ways and just to have a little bit of a background. When we fast throughout the night, the sugar in our blood or the glucose should stay around 70 to 90 approximately. If it dips lower than cortisol is getting produced, we wake up agitated sometimes even with palpitations. If it stays higher for some reason in the middle of the night, then it's activating the nervous system and it tends to wake us up as well. What we want to do throughout the day is to eat. We can eat carbs and when we eat carbs, it's normal that temporarily our body blood sugar goes higher, but generally we don't want it to go above a hundred and forty. One way to know if this is happening or not is using a continuous glucose monitor. There are different companies out there. Most of my patients use NutriSense. You can also get your doctor to write a prescription and use

it directly and that's a little more affordable. However, the app is not as helpful as some of these companies developed like NutriSense that can tell you when you eat, when you eat this food half an hour, an hour after this, you notice the spikes to a certain level. If it goes to 150, 160, then you know that you either need to decrease the amount of carbs in that meal, or you need to have more protein or more fiber, or more fat, or all of that.

Using one of those monitors throughout the month can really tell you how to modify your diet to make sure that your blood sugar is optimal, that it doesn't dip in the middle of the night. If it dips in the middle of the night, you want to make sure you don't have too many high sugar levels throughout the day, but also that you eat enough carbs and the right type of carbs. Sometimes we need a snack before bedtime, believe it or not, for some people, if that happens and then you sleep better. Of course, this is prevention for pre diabetes and diabetes, but a lot of people use these continuous glucose monitors for performance and wellness and disease prevention and even for sleep.

Ads 00:49:03

I want to give thanks to one of our sponsors, IonizeMe Maxx Ionic foot baths. These are the foot baths that I personally use and recommend to all of my patients. If you're looking for an effective way to detox the body that's easy that you can do at home, it doesn't take any time out of your day and you pull all of these toxins in your body into the water, you want to be doing a foot bath. These are fantastic to pull ions into your body through the feet and neutralize toxins. They can help with pain, fatigue, brain fog, weight loss, and even with swelling. They're great at reducing swelling, getting the lymphatics flowing and giving you liver support by pulling out toxins through the feet and into the water. They dramatically increase mobilization and flow of toxins into your urine and stool for two to three days after you do the foot bath. So, they're not just coming out in the water. Get yours today at healthandmed.com.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, it never was different. I know for me, I have to eat three hours before bed. And if I eat later than that, there's some blood sugar issues going on and I wake up in the night. It happens without fail and it just drives me nuts. I've just found that I have to

eat at least three hours before bed and that works so much better for me. And if I eat late, then I always wake up super hungry and it's just without fail. But like, again, everyone's totally different. Like you said, some people have a high metabolism, they might need a snack, uh, before bed.

Dr. Damiana Corca

Yeah.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yes, do what works for you. So, tell us more about your book, *Deep Blue Sleep*. Is there anything we haven't touched on that you have in the book that you want the listeners to know about?

Dr. Damiana Corca

So, let's see, we went over the five types, that's what's at the beginning of the book, and then kind of the stress response, cortisol, neurotransmitters, and I go into adrenal health and neurotransmitter health, and we touched a little bit on digestion, very little, but that's a very comprehensive chapter there, and they're not only changes that are helpful for sleep, but for overall health and understanding how digestion happens. Hormones, sex hormones, and then detox, and what else? Chronic infections, is one of the chapters, whether they're gut infections or Lyme disease or EBV, Epstein Barr virus. Those are some of the things that I touch and mold. Parasites too. I touch on that, especially in the digestive chapter. And then at the end of the book, I just extensively go into sleep hygiene trying to cover all aspects of sleep and you don't have to do everything. It's just what is it that works for you, what you read and you're like, oh, I like to try that because that feels right for me.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, there's a lot to this, so I don't want people to feel overwhelmed, but you can get there. Like it's taken me many, many years to sleep through the night, but I still wake up sometimes. But I'll go back to sleep fairly quickly, but there's a lot to this. Just take one step at a time. I use a sleep mask to black out my room. I just added an air filter by Jasper, which I was really shocked about. It increased my deep sleep doing that.

It's amazing how toxins can definitely impact your sleep and filtering the air can dramatically improve that, but there's just a lot of different things that you can do as we talk about it. If people want to work with you and maybe they're having trouble sleeping, how can people work with you and find out more about your work?

Dr. Damiana Corca

At my website, damianacorca.com, I work with people long distance. I consult and my book is available on Amazon. The audible is just about to be released soon. I know for a lot of people that's helpful because we're on the go or we're just too tired to sit down and read a book sometimes. I know myself too, I listen to books a lot. I thought I'd make this happen. So yeah, and I have a quiz on my website. If it kind of gets confusing and you're curious which type you are, you can take a quiz and it helps you figure out whether it's trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. It takes you from there with different questions to figure out. And then in the email, you'll get a bunch of strategies based on your type.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Fantastic. Well, Damiana, thank you so much for joining us on the show. Everyone, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Thank you so much for tuning in to the Myers Detox podcast where we touch on detoxification health issues caused by different toxins. We talk about anti-aging and one of my biggest passions, which is bioenergetics and so many different high-level advanced strategies for biohacking and advanced health strategies as well. So, thanks for tuning in and I'll talk to you guys next week.

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