To Sleep, To Dream, To Heal: How to Sleep For Optimal Living Transcript

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Introduction to Sleep Optimization

Welcome to the bio optimized summit. I'm dr amy and here we are exploring the next level of physical and mental health. You can reach the intentional and targeted optimization today I have with me. Suzy's inc she is a holistic wellness practitioner and sleep specialist and I wanted her to come and talk to you about this because this is such an important topic when we're addressing vitality and optimizing.

And this is where I had to start with my own health because my sleep was off, my circadian rhythm was off and there was no way of getting everything else balanced without addressing the sleep. So I'm so thankful that she's here with us.

She offers personalized and optimization for the sleep protocols for people. So she works with families, young Children offering custom and practical wellness programs for teens and adults.

She's known for her intuitive empathic abilities and her depth of experience and knowledge to help her clients create powerful heart centered, lasting changes in their sleep, health and outlook on life.

She is frequently interviewed on countless topics related to sleep and health and is a passionate and uplifting speaker dedicated to helping others thrive on all levels.

She lives on the island of Kauai in Hawaii with her family and loves spending time with her son's Susie. Thank you so much for joining us today and I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to us about sleep.

Thank you so much Amy, I'm so happy to be here and it seems rather simple, right? And it seems like, yes, I've heard about sleep. I know sleep is important, but yet not many people really have a good grasp on their sleep, the quality of sleep and understand what all happens when we sleep.

It's not a passive process at all. So walk us through. Why is sleep so important essential for optimizing our health? Yeah. So it's actually a really simple answer.

And it's the reality is that there is not a single known biological process that is not affected for better or worse by sleep or a lack of sleep. So everything, Yeah. So everything from metabolism to immune, the way the immune system works too emotional regulation to everything in between hormones. It's all affected by whether we're getting both good quality sleep and the quantity of sleep that we're getting.

Um and we can often tell that when we wake up, right, if we have been well rested, we're waking up feeling really well. We know that it's gonna be a good day and when we were wake up and we're like, uh that was not restful sleep, even though I've been in bed for 89 hours, maybe if it hasn't been restful sleep.

Sleep Hygiene Basics

We know that we have a tougher day ahead of us. And this really is also the foundation of what I would say is resilience, right? Like our body's ability to handle the stress of life. So depends on the quality of sleep and what's happening during that sleep process. So how do we optimize sleep?

How do we optimize sleep? So in order to talk about how we optimize sleep, we really have to talk about why people have a difficult time sleeping. So there's a word in the Hopi language called, I'm gonna see if I can pronounce this correctly scott c I think it's how you say it, and it basically means life out of balance.

And essentially all of us in the modern world are living in a life out of balance. And part of that is because of the fact that we have indoor lighting at times when there's not natural sunlight.

Part of that is because of the food that we eat. Part of that is because of the elevated stress levels that we experience on a daily basis, that is just not normal.

And so the reason that people aren't sleeping well is because we are so out of sync with the rhythms of nature and we're so out of harmony with um the way that our our bodies are designed to work. And so in order to optimize sleep, it's it's not a simple answer because by the time people have disrupted sleep, there's usually years and years of chronic dis ease in the body that's causing that sleep to be disrupted. And so people want always, especially now in this modern era, a quick, easy fix.

You know, they want to know what pill they can take to help them sleep or what mattress is going to help them sleep better, anything like that? And the reality is that in order to unpack, what's causing a person to not sleep well and then how to optimize their sleep. We really have to look at everything from diet to lifestyle to um habits, the types of habits that they have when they're waking, when they're sleeping, how long they're giving themselves to sleep, The amount of emotional stress in their life and all sorts of different factors that impact sleep and the ability to to sleep well.

Yeah, it really is not an isolated aspect of our life and everything affects sleep, just like sleep affects everything. And I love how you talk about it in terms of being a rhythm, right? We have these rhythms of our body and the circadian rhythm is one of those major rhythms of our body.

And I am thinking of, you know, you living on Hawaii and being surrounded even more by these natural rhythms that we have in the in the natural world, like even the rhythms of the ocean, the rhythms of the moon, like these are rhythms that when us in our modern world get out of balance with out of tune with, then our body is off of our internal rhythm.

And so finding what is affecting what is impacting that natural rhythm of ourselves, whether it be our food, the pace of life, right and all that we're trying to do that is really gonna affect how we can optimize and what we need to change in order to optimize our sleep.

So when you're working with someone, what where are some things that you naturally would start start asking them about and be some things that you would have them change right away.

Sure. So the first and easiest place to start is in what's known as sleep hygiene. And those are basically all the habits that we do and they're the easiest to fix because it is as simple as like oh you need to you know make the temperature in your sleeping environment lower or you need to buy blackout curtains. It's not like the more deeper things, the physiological things where we have to order blood tests and then try to figure out what's going on with your internal body chemistry to figure out why you're not sleeping.

So I would say the top things to figure out for a person who is not um sleeping well is first of all, are you sleeping in a dark room? Are you sleeping in a cold room? Are you um eating balanced meals?

In other words, are you eating sugar or caffeine right before bed or late at night? That can be a real big issue for people with sleep. Another thing is are you sleeping with um by dark room?

I mean a pitch black dark room?

Cortisol, Stress, and Nervous System Balance

We want it to be like a cave and people don't realize that, you know if they have a smoke detector in their in their room that has that little light that comes down that puts off a lot of light, or if they have one of those luminescent pads on their light switch that lights up the room or, you know, lets them know where the light switches or if they use the night light or if they have an alarm clock next to their bed. These are all things that can um really, really impact a person's quality of sleep. I'll give you an example when I travel, I'm a I'm a very light sleeper, which is part of the reason that I got into this work, but when I travel, hotel rooms are like the bane of my existence, and I'm always on the lookout for a hotel room, that I can actually get a good quality night's sleep in. And I I travel with a roll

of painter's tape so that I can, you know, like uh put tape on the curtain on the curtains and block out the curtains, because even if they have blackout curtains, the light still seeps in and um you know, just all over the room, wherever there's ambient light.

I I I do that. So it's funny that you said that because I will stuff the towels, take all the towels out from the bathroom, stuff them under the door so that there's no light coming in from the hallway.

Yes, it's a whole process to set up the room in a hotel room to try to optimize sleep. Yes. And it's also good to know this is kind of an aside, but when we sleep in a new environment, our brains don't fully relax. And it's and it's designed that way as a protective mechanism. So when you're traveling, just be aware that for the first night or two that you're in a new environment, your brain is not gonna be fully off and in sleep mode.

So you're just going to get a worse night sleep, no matter what you do. It's absolutely. And this is this is kind of where I started with my sleep journey, was realizing just how vigilant I was and then I was expecting to be able to fall asleep when I was still, you know, worried about my to do list and am I gonna forget this?

And so let me try to like keep that thought in my mind that when I wake up, it's still right there and I'm not going to forget it. And so it's like I was never allowing my body to actually see surrender and rest and relax and go into that deep state of our nervous system that we have to in order to get that restful sleep. And so just the vigilance that happens when we're traveling and we're in a new environment or anything else going on in our life if it creates the state of vigilance, it's definitely going to affect our sleep.

Yes, So you bring up a really good point, which is that most of us these days are in the parasympathetic nervous system way more than we're supposed to be.

Which is what most people have probably heard as the fight flight or freeze mode. And um what happens is that we have a hormone in our body called cortisol.

And cortisol is also known as the stress hormone. And in a normal, healthy functioning optimized body, cortisol is normally highest. First thing in the morning, it's that um, that energy that allows us to jump out of bed and feel like we're we have all of the energy that we need to tackle our day. So point to note is that if you wake up in the morning and you don't have that energy, it might be because you actually have low cortisol because you have been in the parasympathetic mode for too long and you're basically like overstressed for too long. But in an optimized person, it's supposed to be really, really high in the morning.

Give us that boost and jolt of energy to start our day and then slowly taper off as the day goes on, there's a little increase in the late afternoon and then it's and then it drops and then it's lowest in the middle of the night. But for someone who says, I go to bed, I try to lay down, I'm wide awake, I cannot fall asleep, probably what's going on is that you have elevated cortisol in the evening at a time that it's supposed to be lower. And there's many, many different reasons that that can occur. Um stress is definitely one of them um eating um having unbalanced blood sugar is another one. Uh So that's where we get into the more complicated, deeper aspect of how to optimize sleep and why sleep isn't working.

But just know that if you're not able to fall asleep at night, it's highly likely that your cortisol is dis regulated and that you need to do things to bring that back into balance. Absolutely. And that's an actually an easy test to do.

If you're working with a functional medicine provider, it's an easy salivary test. And so you measure it four times a day when you first wake up and then throughout the day into the evening at bedtimes that you can see what your actual levels of cortisol are.

And yes, that is definitely a reflection of your sympathetic. But yet at the same time, if you have been living in sympathetic for so long, like you say, your system may be exhausted. And so you actually may have that low cortisol.

And yeah, I get so mixed up as it did. I did. I reverse. I totally know what you were talking about.

Light Exposure and Melatonin

So I was just going to like slip in there and let people know make sure that they know that we're talking about sympathetic and not very sympathetic. It's fine. It's all good.

And so yes like when we are in the active sympathetic state, our adrenaline is high and with that adrenaline and that's what cues are cortisol to come up.

And so the adrenaline is kind of like if you were waiting for someone to text you back right? And so a lot of people I know always have their phone with them and they go to bed with their phone right beside them in case they get that text back where they get that call back.

And that's the worst thing to do because again like your body is in that vigilant state it's not in the I'm surrendering to this internal rhythm and it's being able to relax all as well. My environment is safe.

I can you know curl up in this dark cool cave that I've created for myself and really sleep well knowing that all is safe. And so the best you know sleep is gonna come when you can leave your phone in a separate room like not even have that attached to you so that you really can create this environment for yourself or your nervous system can shift from that sympathetic. Let the cortisol levels come down which hopefully should have started several hours earlier, right?

Like you're talking about with the diet and everything and then be able to really go into that deep parasympathetic And if people have questions about that.

Yeah definitely find someone who can actually measure your cortisol levels so that you have objective data that can help inform you of what might be playing a role in sleep problems.

Yes. And what you mentioned about leaving your phone in the other room, there's this other piece which I kind of touched on but it's it's so important and I think that people don't even think about it.

So we evolved over a very long period of time where all we had for light was the sun and the moon and campfires maybe. Um And now we have you know unnatural lighting and even the spectrum of light that the light bulbs that we use is not unless you have a full spectrum bulb it's not a natural um type of light.

And the light that is emitted at night from campfires is in a different spectrum than the daylight, the sunlight. And so the light that comes off of our computers and off of our screens is in the blue spectrum mostly the blue spectrum of light.

And that is something that disrupts melatonin production which is another really important hormone for sleep. Because melatonin is the hormone that triggers us to let us know that it's time to sleep. So it triggers the onset of sleep and when people are are watching the news at night or on their computers working late or you know checking their phone in the evenings or even just using light bulbs in their house that are the, you know um L. E. D. S.

The bright white L. E. D. S. What that is doing is it's basically telling your body to not produce melatonin and to stay in an alert wakeful state. I was actually just reading an article about what happens for people in the very northern latitudes like at the northern part of Norway because they have this really weird light dark cycle and that the summer the sun never sets, the sun never sets.

And in the winter they only have like 45 minutes of daylight. And because of that they have really big challenges with their sleep. Mostly in the winter, they suffer from very severe depression and difficulty with their energy. And When you don't get enough light, natural sunlight, it actually triggers the body to want to hibernate and when you get too much light it triggers the body to want to be awake. And we are designed to sleep on this beautiful approximate 24 hour cycle where when it's dark out, we sleep and when it's light out, we're awake and when we have all of these unnatural sources of light at a time when it's supposed to be dark, then we're not able to wind

down because our body isn't getting the right cues to let us know that hey, it's actually time to rest and be asleep. So another um sleep hygiene aspect of optimizing one's sleep is making sure that at night you are really aware of the type of light that you're being exposed to.

And they have settings on your computer and they have settings on your phone. Now that actually like for an iphone, it's called night shift. They also have an app called F. Dot L. U. X.

On your um computer. That will change the frequency of the light to an amber colored frequency at my house, Alexa tells me at sunset every night, it's sun, it's sunset, It's time to get your house ready for the evening and then I dim all the lights. My family thinks that I'm like a light nazi because after like eight or nine o'clock at night, the only lights in my house are red colored lights. So it kind of looks like um a brothel in Amsterdam around here but it's really really important for sleep. And for people who for some people they're like, oh I, you know, it doesn't make a difference for me, but people who are sensitive like me, it's, it's a killer.

Like if I spend time, I actually also have glasses that I wear, I can go get them if you want to see them. But they're uh these wonderful glasses that you wear and they will block out all of the spectrum of light that is not in the amber or red frequency. And if I don't wear those and I'm on my computer at night, you can forget it and it's not just the um, it's not just the light itself, it's actually me being like having a laptop on my lap.

That energy, the, the energy from the computer is enough to just mess with Me too. It does like the, just the waves that are coming off the computer uh for people who are sensitive and it sounds like you may be just as sensitive as I am.

But um yeah, so here are my glasses that I use.

Temperature, Routine, and Circadian Rhythm

These are, these are from true dark glasses. And so I start wearing these an hour before bedtime to block all the blue light. Is that enough time susie?

But to really allow my melatonin to, to be at healthy normal levels in my blood for sleep. What time do you go to bed anywhere between nine and 10? Yeah, I would say so because I mean, you know, if you think that like the sun goes down at 77 ish um from that point on you just really want to have a, you know, something that mimics what's going on outdoors as much as possible. And the other thing that I would say is, you know, best, you know, if, if if you're wearing them and you're still having difficulty falling asleep, then I would say start them earlier.

They also also have these ones that are not red, but they're amber. And so they're a little bit more for kind of evening time and you could transition from those two. You know, if you want to stay up and watch a movie and you want to stay a little a little a little bit later than you could use your red glasses. It's kind of weird to watch movies with the red lenses, but it's better than not being able to sleep.

That is true. And I have definitely noticed the difference between my activities and what I'm doing in terms of, am I writing a big paper, right? Because it's much harder it takes me longer to shut my brain down to relaxation mode, depends on how hard I'm working up until bedtime.

But I've also noticed that watching any kind of news or an action type movie where there's a lot of movement on the screen, it keeps my brain in that hypervigilant mode for longer.

So I know that it's affecting my my hormone levels right. Probably getting that dopamine and that adrenaline up to. And so yeah, I have to be really mindful of my activities in the evening, especially that hour before bedtime. And even if I'm still working toning it down in terms of the amount of mental exertion that it's taking for that work that I'm doing also, this might be something that people haven't thought about, but if you are someone who does strenuous exercise after work.

Um for some people again, if you're not sensitive, pardon me, it can be just fine. But for someone who isn't sleeping

well look and see, hey are you one of those people who's doing like a high intensity workout in the evening because if so again that can um increase your cortisol and then you might not be able to have it come back down before you. You're trying to fall asleep.

I'm loving that you're saying this Susie and I wish that I had met you back and when I was having to figure all this stuff out for myself because I was just experimenting.

Like I didn't have the guidance of what I would love to have had from you because I would have gotten to where I wanted to be much faster. But yeah, I started with like figuring out the lights. So I had already realized that when I was laying in bed any kind of lights, even if they weren't flashing, but especially if they were flashing was preventing me from relaxing and falling to sleep. So that was the first thing that I took out of my room. And then I realized how much light there was in my room. And I started reading up on not only its effects on the melatonin but then the mitochondria and how like so much of the process of repair that happens in the body and even the drainage right?

Like like our brain is supposed to be draining all of its limp and cleaning things out during the night and light affects all of that. And so we think we're asleep, we think we're getting all the hours of sleep, but these lights are actually affecting all the activity that is supposed to be happening. And so I put up blackout curtains and then and then I started experimenting with food and I realized I cannot eat anywhere probably two hours, 2.5 hours before bedtime and sleep well.

And so that was something that that got taken out. And then I realized the exercise. So I'm so glad you're bringing this up because I would come home from work and I would want to go exercise, right? And that was what I was supposed to be doing in order to lose weight and it was actually affecting my sleep, which then would make me more tired in the morning.

And just by switching that all around and getting into bed with better quality of sleep, I'm able to get up earlier and now I go exercise in the morning and it's just it's yeah, allowed my body to have this internal rhythm that feels really good and really healthy.

Really invigorating. Right? Right. And I think I kind of like an easy hack to figure out whether you're doing things right, is really to compare yourself to like what a caveman would do thousands of years ago, they're gonna wake up in the morning, they're gonna go out and like if they're farmers that that was after caveman, but you know, they're gonna wake up, they're gonna go out, they're gonna farm, they're gonna go hunting, they're gonna be foraging and they're not gonna be like chasing a wild buffalo at sunset, if you know, like that's not the way it's gonna work.

So um it's, it's just easy I think to be like, okay, if I were, if I didn't have that, what would my life be like? And then it's just to try to kind of do our best given that we live in the modern era to see how we can adjust things to, to mimic that reality.

And another hack that you did already mentioned was, is the temperature of the room. And I was shocked at how much of a difference that made from my sleep.

I had never even thought about it before. Never even crossed my mind, that temperature would play that much of a role. But then when I started reading this and I brought the temperature of the room down to about 69, um at least like, Wow, what a difference in my quality of sleep.

And again, that's something that relates to, to the rhythms of nature because when the sun goes down, the temperature cools. And so it's a trigger to our body that when it's cooler, it's time to sleep. And um one thing that I like to do and it's kind of like, I don't sleep well. If I don't do it, I take a really hot shower right before bed because it causes a quick spike in my internal body temperature caused by like a rapid decrease.

And that rapid decrease again is a trigger to to fall asleep. Another thing that's really interesting about the way that the bird brain works is that we work. We um function through a lot of conditioning.

I'm sure you guys have probably heard of like Pavlov's dog where they ring the bell and the mouth salivates. So

similarly we work our brains work similarly.

So if you create a bedtime routine where you do similar things in a similar pattern, um The subconscious mind is gonna start to know oh right I'm supposed to be winding down right now. This is like this is where we're headed.

We're headed into sleep land and I have to be pretty specific about it.

Infrared Light, Inflammation, and Recovery

So I always take um I always take a shower and then even like the way that my covers are and like the side of the side that I lay on and how my pillow is tucked, it all has to be the same. And then it's like okay now I can sleep.

So for some people like my fiance, he I wish we could clone his D. N. A. Because he is like the world's greatest sleeper and none of this is relevant for him and he can just sleep on the you know the drop of a hat and sleep for hours and wake up rested all the time.

But for some of us were not designed that way. And so we just have to be more careful and vigilant and protective of our sleep. Well, I love that. I've finally met someone who seems to have just as sensitive as the system is mine and that is not only me.

Yeah, the lengths that I have had to go to in order to hack my sleep and figure out what it takes and yeah, like now my sleep is solid. Um, but it took a lot, it took a lot of experimenting and again, just a wide variety of things like we're talking about. And one other thing that I want to throw in there is, uh, if I don't get a hot shower then, and I actually have a bio mat that I also turn the temperature up. So in addition to the infrared, I'm getting that warmth and that temperature. So, you know, I've got the cool room, but then I've got my cocoon and so I'm on my bio matt's giving me that heat, especially along my spine that is so relaxing.

Um, and especially if I'm needing to take like a power nap, if I get on my bio mat. And then the other thing that I use susie is a weighted blanket. And so that combination of my bio mat and weighted blanket, whether it's to fall asleep at night or to get a power nap of about 25, 30 minutes has been priceless. It gives me such deep sleep.

That's awesome. Yeah. Another thing is which you know, there's so many things that I realized that I take for granted and that I just assume that everybody knows and then I'm like, oh yeah, they don't know that stuff.

So rhythm and routine is really important again, like, you know, the sun rises at a certain time and it sets at a certain time and yet our schedules are all over the place. And so if you're a person who sometimes goes to bed at 10 o'clock and sometimes stays up till two o'clock, it's gonna be a lot harder for you to get into a rhythm where you can actually fall asleep.

So it's really important to if you're working on your sleep to try to wake up around the same time every day and try to go to sleep around the same time every day and to eat at regular intervals around the same time each day. And you mentioned infrared light.

That's also a really important thing to talk about. So infrared light is a part of the light spectrum and it's the light that is available from the sun Before nine a.m. and then in the evening around sunset time.

And most of us are really deficient in infrared light. And they've done a lot of studies that show that when you get more infrared light, you actually have better ability to uh fight the effects of getting sunburned in the day.

And also there's all sorts of other amazing health benefits to getting infrared light. So one thing that you can do that would also help is pick a time that works for you in the morning, sometime around 66 30 a. M. When the sun is rising, even if that is a really, really hard time right now for you to wake up, just do it. Because if you start doing that, even if you're tired for a couple of days, then your body will be like, well we'll start to feel tired at a reasonable hour at night and when you wake up, go outside, get morning sunlight in your eyes because it will actually actually trigger your body to get sync up to the rhythm of the sun. And you'll also start to get some of that infrared light on

your skin. And it's really helpful for overall health.

And if you can't do that then you can get an infrared sauna like Amy is talking about well and one of the things that I that I had to change and I'm glad you're bringing this up is my morning routine and having a consistent time that I get up and wake up and I've read that that is more important than the time that you go to bed, even though both are important. Both are important, but it's super important to have the time that you wake up be the same time every day.

And yes, to get outside and get that natural light. I used to go outside and automatically put on my sunglasses because again, like my system, my eyes are very sensitive and so I would want to have my sunglasses on already in the morning and so forcing myself to know like we're going to leave the sunglasses off and now we're going to go out and get that natural light first thing in the morning has been really helpful to just establish that internal rhythm.

I know right. And the bio mat that I have is infrared radiation. And so it's actually not admitting any lights. The only thing that does bother me about it is that on the control box itself, like where I turn it on, it has this bright blue light and I'm like of all colors to make the, to make this light. So I've had to to tape that off.

I've had to figure out how to block that light. But otherwise yeah, that that infrared radiation really I have found for me like really helps decrease the inflammation in my system. Um that that it can get those benefits from from the mat. I think it's like six inches from the mat that it's emitting those those effects. And so I wake up more rested.

I'm assuming that it is because of those properties of the infrared radiation. But yeah, the infrared lights are are definitely super important too if you can, you know, get get those what however you can outside or the infrared saunas, whatever, whatever you can, you mentioned inflammation.

And that's another important, amazing, wonderful thing that sleep helps with. You mentioned the lymphatic system that when we sleep at night our brains actually detoxify and decrease the inflammation.

How Much Sleep We Need

So if anybody out there is struggling with any health issue that's related to inflammation and your also having difficulty with sleep, it's really no wonder because they kind of go hand in hand, a lack of good quality sleep and um, increased inflammation in the body.

So just know that if you're struggling with chronic pain or you're struggling with um any inflammation related disease, whatever it might be um which is basically all of them getting good quality sleep is really important. And how many hours of sleep do we actually need? Suzy, what are we, what are we working towards?

So they've done studies that because, okay, they've done studies that show that the amount of sleep that we all need is approximately the same. And I've heard lots and lots of people say, oh I'm one of those people that, you know, does really, really well on four hours of sleep for six hours of sleep.

Or even I think like Tesla, he like, I don't know, he has some weird sleep thing and there's been people throughout history. So the reality is that the amount of people who need less than somewhere between seven and eight and 7.5 and 8.5 hours of sleep Is point like.0001. And they have a genetic marker that indicates that that they actually need less sleep. Um so if you are only getting 66 hours of sleep and you say that you feel fine, I would encourage you to go for, you know, put yourself to bed a little bit earlier, try to sleep in.

Try not to use the alarm clock for a week or so and see how long you actually sleep and see if you don't feel better and have more mental clarity and have more energy.

Um because we really really need that sleep in order to do well. And historically we slept two hours more 100 years ago per person per night. So at least 7.5 8 hours.

I, you know what I noticed in myself is that sometimes my schedule is just crazy. And so sometimes I just don't get

my full seven or eight hours of sleep.

And I really, I think that it's probably like right around the eight hour mark um that I feel best. And so sometimes I just, you know, for whatever reason I get around six hours of sleep, but then my body will make up for it and I will sleep like nine or 9.5 hours another night and I'm like, wow, and then I wake up and I feel amazing. So yeah, I think that the other thing to note is that sleep is, is a lifestyle, it's a journey, it's not something that like you get it and then you perfect it and then everything's okay because things still happen in life and you still have ups and downs and um there's no one in the world who always gets a perfect night's sleep, that just doesn't happen. So um don't feel badly if you're not sleeping well and know that you can definitely get better quality sleep if you're struggling now.

Yeah, it really is just part of a flexible system that we have, where given what's going on in our life or our day or our health, there's gonna be changes in flow to that. But the more of a routine, we can have, the more of a healthy flexible system and internal rhythm, we can have, the more it's going to be able to to do those adjustments and stay in a good place. Good. Now for people who are working with maybe uh medications, have you had much experience with people who are reaching for medications or trying to get off of medications to sleep?

And some of the impacts that that can have on a person's ability to re establish an internal rhythm and good sleep without those AIDS. I love this question too because my opinion about it is different than most people's.

Sleep Medications and Natural Alternatives

So most people are uh severely deficient in vitamin D. And the reason for that again is because we evolved we were outside all day long, we were getting natural sunlight all day long and now most people live indoors.

And so the best one of the best ways to increase the ability to sleep well and to get good quality sleep is to actually get your vitamin D. Back in an optimal range. Which is just that you know it's 60 to 90 and the difference between optimal and normal is really really different.

So if you get vitamin D. Tested and it's over 30 they will tell you that you're within normal range. But until you get it between 60 and 90 it's it's not optimal and you're not gonna have the best quality sleep that you can get.

So with things that people take like Ambien or Xanax or other things to sleep, it creates uh it causes a sedative effect in the body and so it causes people to knock out but not have a natural cycle of sleep.

A natural cycle of sleep we go through um light sleep to um non rem sleep to rem sleep through about a 90 minute cycle. And we do that several times per night.

But when you take um Ambien or something like this you're not able to get into the deepest stages of sleep and this is really important. The deepest stages of sleep are where your body actually does the repair work. So if you're not getting into those deepest stages of sleep then you can't do your body, can't do the repair work to reduce the inflammation and clear out your brain and do all the things that it needs to do.

And so people say don't use Ambien, it doesn't allow you to have a normal cycle of sleep and it um is habit forming. All of those things are true, but here's the piece that they're missing when a person takes Ambien and they if if a person is not able to sleep at all, they're like I get into bed, I lay awake for the entire night. I cannot fall asleep.

I am like I'm struggling even if so Ambien in different people, it has a different half cycle or half, what is it called up? Its half life, thank you. It stays in the body for a different period of time for different people, depending on their metabolism.

Usually it's about four hours. And so if a person takes that to fall asleep and they're in bed for eight hours, yes, they are not going to to get normal deep sleep in the first four hours. But at some point in time it's going to wear off and then hopefully they're going to be able to get some normal sleep within that time period. And even if it's only 20 minutes of normal sleep, that might be more than they're getting. So.

I don't think that using Ambien long term without doing all these other things that we're talking about is is good or healthy. But if it's helping someone to get over the hump of not being able to sleep, if it's helping someone with the anxiety that they experience which causes this elevated cortisol in their body where they're getting into bed and they're they're already anxious because they say you know I know tonight's gonna be just like all the other night and I'm just gonna be awake all night.

If it can help break that anxious cycle then I think that there's a place for it to be used while we're working on all the other aspects of a person feeling better.

And there's alternatives to these um these pharmaceuticals that are more natural like Gaba and melatonin and all sorts of other herbal supplements um that you can try as well. But for some people they just need something that's gonna knock them out and help them along their way.

And I actually love that. That is your answer because that's very similar to how I see things where as a long term solution Absolutely not right, it's not going to give you sustainable good restful sleep but as a short term tool.

Sometimes it is the best tool for that moment while we're working on everything else we're not neglecting all the other pieces that we need to do in order to be able to have you get restful sleep without that tool. But it can be a tool supplements can be a tool.

I will often recommend you know the five Htp because that feeds into the melatonin system. So your melatonin levels will be helped with that. You can take melatonin directly also meaning which is like the adrenaline blocker that can really help with racing thoughts.

Where to Find Suzy and Closing Remarks

So there are, there are many tools that we, you can use along this process, especially in the beginning where we haven't been able to put all the other places in place yet. And so having these tools just allows a person to get there faster and be more successful in the meantime when sleep can really be an issue and it really is exhausting when for days on end for we fun in your sleep is not where it's at. So thank you. Yeah.

Yeah, I'm glad we're on the same page. Is that there's so many people out there who shame people for taking things like Ambien and I just don't think that that's healthy or constructive or really honestly accurate, right? Can be a tool that's good. Well thank you Suzie and where can people come and find you, where can people come and learn more information about the work that you're doing and other tips for sleep.

I have a website and it's just my name. It's uh W W W dot Susie S U Z I E S E N K dot com and I have information about my offerings and the work that I do and you can also book a free 15 minute complimentary session through a link that I have on that website as well. Man. I wish I would have known you back when I was starting my health journey. I really would have appreciated working with you, Susie. You know, I I was there to the reason that I got into this work is because after my son was born I had chronic and severe insomnia for three years. And even if he wasn't a good sleeper, I wasn't a good sleeper. And even after I got him sleeping well, I couldn't sleep and I was a wreck. I mean my health was a wreck.

I was you know emotionally all over the place and I had to figure it out. So um my heart goes out to anybody out there who is struggling with sleep because I know firsthand how horrible it can be. We have both been there.

Yeah, well, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you again for taking the time to share with us your experience and knowledge. Suzy, thank you so much amy, thank you for having me. I hope this summit is such an amazing success.

I know it's so important to be able to share this information with people so that they can start to optimize their their lives and feel well and thrive like we all want to.

Yes, there is so much more that is available when we feel well because we have our biology in place. So thank you

and thank you for joining us today. I am your host for this summit, DR AMY and make sure and get the discount for the summit recordings while it lasts once that is over that is gone forever.

So make sure and get that discount price. And while you have it. And I would just love to see you inside and be able to connect with you more and together.

Let's find that next level of health and aliveness.