

The Business of Better Sleep

Sleep used to be simple. You turned off the light, closed your eyes, and hoped you would wake up feeling good. Now sleep is becoming a big business. Many companies sell gadgets, apps, and subscriptions that promise better rest.

A lot of people feel tired, so startups think customers will pay for help. Some products are basic. For example, an app can play relaxing sounds. A supplement can help you feel calm. A wearable device can track your sleep and give you a score in the morning. Other products feel like luxury items.

One well-known company, Eight Sleep, sells a “sleep system” that works with a normal bed. It tries to improve sleep by controlling the bed environment. The system can cool or warm each side of the bed. It can also change the bed’s position by raising the head. It plays guided audio, and it uses sensors to track things like breathing and heart rate. The message is simple: if you struggle to sleep well, the bed is designed to help.

However, the price is high. These systems can cost thousands of dollars, and some also require a yearly membership. This is a common pattern in many tech products today. Companies like subscriptions because they earn money every year, not just once. Sleep is a strong reason to pay because it affects your mood, focus, and energy all day.

Still, not everyone wants technology in the bedroom. Some people prefer a human expert. This is why sleep coaching is growing. Sleep coaches first became popular for babies and toddlers. Many parents hire a coach when a child wakes up often or fights bedtime. The coach creates routines and helps parents stay consistent.

Now some sleep coaches also work with adults. Many adults feel stressed, spend too much time on screens, and cannot “switch off” at night. Some coaches offer support for several months. They talk with clients regularly and try to find the real cause of the problem.

Often the cause is very practical. Some people save most of their calories for late at night. After a while, their body gets used to it, and they wake up wanting food. Some drink too much water and wake up many times to use the bathroom. Some stay in bed and scroll on their phone for a long time, which keeps the brain active. A coach can notice patterns like these and suggest simple changes.

Coaching also deals with how people think about sleep. Some people tell themselves negative stories, like “I’m a bad sleeper,” or “If I sleep more, I’m being lazy.” These thoughts can make sleep harder. When someone is awake at night, they may start worrying, checking the time, and feeling angry at themselves. That stress can keep them awake even longer. A coach may help them build better habits and a calmer mindset.

Of course, technology is also copying the coaching idea. Some sleep apps now offer AI “coaches.” They look at your data and give advice. Some smartwatches also suggest how much sleep you may need based on your day. The good part is cost and convenience. AI can give quick advice without appointments. But AI can miss important context. It cannot always understand real life problems like a new baby, a breakup, job stress, or anxiety in the middle of the night.

But there is an important question: does sleep tech really work? Many devices estimate sleep stages using indirect signs, like movement, heart rate, and oxygen level. Doctors still trust sleep tests done in a clinic more, because those tests use many sensors to measure the body during sleep. Also, many sleep products do not have strong scientific studies proving they improve health. Some people stop using wearables after a while because they do not see real changes.

There is also a problem with tracking itself. Seeing a bad sleep score in the morning can make you feel worse. If your device says you are “not ready,” you might believe it and have a worse day. In that way, tracking can create stress, and stress can harm sleep.

In the end, the most effective sleep advice is often simple and cheap. Go to bed and wake up at similar times each day. Keep the room dark and cool. Reduce screentime before bed. Avoid caffeine late in the day. Build a routine that tells your brain the day is ending. These steps are not exciting, and they do not make companies money. But for many people, they may help more than any expensive gadget. Sleep may be a business now, but the basics still matter most.

- 1) How many hours do you sleep each night? Is it enough?
- 2) Do you have trouble sleeping? What makes it difficult?
- 3) What do you usually do before bed?
- 4) Do you use any tools to help you sleep?
- 5) Would you buy an expensive product to sleep better? Why or why not?
- 6) Do you think people in Korea have problems with sleep? Why?
- 7) In Korea, is sleep seen as important, or is it seen as less important than work or study?
- 8) How can sleep tracking be harmful for some people?
- 9) If you had \$1,000 to improve your sleep, what would you choose first: technology, a coach, or changes to your room?
- 10) If you had to improve your sleep with zero spending, what three rules would you follow? Which rule would be hardest?
- 11) Why do people today try to improve everything, even sleep?
- 12) Why do tech companies like subscriptions? How does that help their business?

Gadget	(n)	a small device made to do a specific job, often using technology	He bought a simple gadget that turns on white noise at night.
Supplement	(n)	a pill or powder you take to add nutrients or support your health	She takes a magnesium supplement to help her relax before bed.

Track	(v)	to follow and record information over time	He uses his watch to track how many hours he sleeps each night.
Struggle	(v)	to have difficulty doing something	Many people struggle to fall asleep when they feel stressed.
Routine	(n)	a set of actions you do in the same order each day	Her bedtime routine includes a shower, reading, and turning off her phone.
Consistent	(adj)	happening in the same way or at the same time again and again	Try to keep a consistent bedtime, even on weekends.
Switch off	(phr v)	to stop thinking about something and relax	After work, he finds it hard to switch off and stop worrying.
Practical	(adj)	focused on simple actions that work in real life	A practical step is to stop drinking water right before bed.
Notice	(v)	to see or realize something	She noticed that coffee after lunch made it harder to sleep.
Deal with	(phr v)	to handle a problem or situation	He learned to deal with stress without looking at his phone at night.
Mindset	(n)	the way you think about something	A healthier mindset about sleep can reduce late-night worry.
Advice	(n)	suggestions about what you should do	Her coach gave advice about keeping the room cool and dark.
Based on	(phr)	using something as the reason or main information	The app gave tips based on his sleep data from the past week.
Appointment	(n)	a planned meeting with someone, such as a doctor or coach	She made an appointment with a sleep coach for next Monday.
Estimate	(v)	to guess a number or amount using available information	The device can estimate your sleep stages, but it is not perfect.

Indirect	(adj)	not direct, and not measured in the most exact way	A smartwatch uses indirect signs to guess how well you slept.
Measure	(v)	to find the size, amount, or level of something	A clinic test can measure sleep more accurately than a phone app.
Prove	(v)	to show something is true with clear evidence	It is hard to prove that a gadget improves sleep for everyone.
Tracking	(n)	the act of following and recording information over time	Tracking can be helpful, but it can also make some people anxious.
Harm	(v)	to damage or negatively affect something	Too much screen time can harm your sleep quality.
Reduce	(v)	to make something smaller or less	He reduced caffeine in the afternoon and slept better.
Basics	(n)	the simple and most important parts of something	The basics of good sleep include a dark room and a steady schedule.
Matter	(v)	to be important	Small habits matter when you are trying to sleep better.