

# How An Extra Hour's Sleep Can Save Your Life

It's not just about beauty sleep. Getting more zzzs can ward off stress and even cancer

**Y**ou know that refreshed feeling you get after waking up from a blissful night's snooze? No? You're not alone. A new study has discovered that losing just one hour's kip a night doesn't just affect your mental agility by 40% – it can be a matter of life and death. That's because the effect that six and half hours' sleep, as opposed to seven and a half, has on your body is huge, with genes associated with stress, immunity, diabetes and even cancer becoming more active.

"You can actually survive better without food than you can without sleep," says Jo Usmar, co-author and the brains behind *This Book Will Make You Sleep*. "But the amount people get has been declining over the years. In fact, 51.3% of adults in the UK still struggle to drop off at night, with one in 10 suffering from insomnia."

If that sounds like you, read on to start getting some quality zzzs, pronto.



PHOTO: AUGUST IMAGES THIS BOOK WILL MAKE YOU SLEEP BY JO USMAR AND JESSAMY HIBBERD (E7.99, QUERCUS) | SOUT NOW | JESSAMYANDJO.COM

## Sleep Expert Jo's Tips For Getting A Good Night's Kip



### 1 **Try thought blocking**

If you're stressing out in bed, repeat a word that has no emotional meaning (eg 'sheep'!) over and over in your head with your eyes closed. Keep at it for three to five minutes. You'll feel calmer as you're taking back control of your mind.

### 2 **Relax your whole body**

Tensing your muscles for 10 seconds and then consciously releasing them for 15-20 seconds brings on a deep state of relaxation, which relieves many conditions including insomnia. When you release, say "Let go" in your head – it keeps your mind on the task.

### 3 **Don't hit snooze**

Get up as soon as your alarm goes off. Lying in bed and thinking about what you have to do that day will make you associate bed with stress and will make sleep harder the next night. Your mood automatically lifts when you get up, as you're facing the day.

### 4 **Turn down the heat**

Your core body temperature needs to drop when you sleep, so hiking it up will keep you awake. Turn off the heating to give yourself a chance to cool down. If you're then chilly, opt for a hot water bottle and bed socks rather than raising the room temperature.