

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 749

5 Ways To Have A Silent Night & Improve Your Sleep Quality

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to The Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. 'Tis the season for joy, family, health, connection, and fun. In this episode, we're gonna be diving into five ways to have a silent night and improve your sleep quality. So buckle into your sleigh, grab your jingle bells and hold on tight. This is gonna be filled with incredible information.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The holiday season is a great time for us to reflect, for us to recalibrate and for us to connect, and it's also a great time to set some new standards, to set some new habits in place for our health and wellness. And ironically, this can also be a time where our schedules are a little bit discombobulated and kind of all over the place, but in our efforts to set a new standard and to create more silent nights and improve our sleep quality, these five science-based strategies are going to help to fulfill that need. Now, first and foremost, why is this so essential right now? Well, insomnia is a prevalent sleep problem in our culture, whether it's insomnia-like symptoms or diagnosed conditions, right now we're inching closer to about 90 million Americans being regularly sleep deprived according to the NIH, but to dig a little bit deeper, data published in the Journal of Sleep and others have found that in the United States the annual prevalence of insomnia symptoms affect 35% to 50% of our citizens and diagnosed insomnia disorders have been reported to be 10% to 22% of our population. In other countries, insomnia has been on the rise in the past few decades as well, but they are still faring far better than the US with the sleeping problem.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For example, the prevalence of insomnia symptoms in Korea was reported to be 17% to 23% of their population, and insomnia diagnosis was at about 5% of their population. So to summarize this, the rates of insomnia are literally less than half of what's seen here in the United States. Something is severely wrong, but this is something that we can do so much to help turn around. One night here or there we're staying up late, shout out to Santa Claus is fine, but when we're doing this on a regular basis, that's when we can run into some significant problems. Why does this matter so much for our health? Well, in addition to consistent sleep deprivation and poor sleep quality doubling our risk of heart disease and cardiac events. If you look at this epidemic of diabetes and insulin resistance, a meta-analysis of 10 highly vetted studies conducted by the California Institute of Behavioral Neurosciences and Psychology found a strong connection between sleep deprivation and the rapid onset of insulin resistance.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The researchers have noted a causal. So this isn't just a correlation, a causal relationship between sleep deprivation and insulin resistance, but also noted that it's

multifactorial being that sleep deprivation also significantly increases inflammation and more studies are needed to find out the sequence of how things are going wrong when we start to be short on sleep. Also, insulin resistance. Why does this matter? Well, it significantly increases the risk of about nine of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States. This is something for us to be more aware of and to understand the impact that sleep has on our insulin sensitivity, but what about other aspects of our metabolic health and in particular looking at our body composition, in particular, our body fat. A study published in the American Academy of Sleep Medicine tracked the impact of not getting enough sleep on visceral belly fat over a five-year period.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The study used CT scans and revealed that people who sleep less than six hours per night at a 32% gain in visceral belly fat, compared to a 13% increase among those who slept for six or seven hours per night. In summary, people who got less than six hours of sleep per night over the course of the study period, gained more than twice as much visceral belly fat. So our lack of sleep is showing up on our waist line. And here's the secret that shouldn't be a secret. Santa isn't just up one night a year, alright, if you're wondering why he's so robust around the midsection, Santa's got insomnia, alright, the truth is out. And that's why this episode is so important to share Santa's story to help to get him healthier, but more importantly to get our citizens healthier. Now, we're gonna dive into these five science-backed ways to have a silent night and to improve our sleep quality.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And number one is to lay off the candy canes late in the evening. Added sugar has been found to cause major disruptions to our sleep quality, a six-month study conducted by scientists at the University of Copenhagen found the consumption of added sugar and sugar sweetened beverages can lead to an objective loss of one hour worth of sleep each night, what this means is using technology to objectively track our sleep quality, our sleep efficiency. Folks might think that they're going to bed and getting seven hours of sleep, but they're losing one hour of their sleep. They're actually only getting the benefits of six hours of sleep when they're consuming these products with all of this added sugar. They're literally tearing their sleep quality apart. Now with total calories remaining the same in their diet, a higher ratio of added sugar was found to steal some of the sweetness from their sleep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, so just overall, during the day, what we're doing during the day is impacting our sleep quality at night, so being mindful of our sugar consumption, especially during this time of year, there's so much sweetness. Alright, we got the candy canes, we got the cakes, we got the pies, we got their fruit cake that I still don't know who's eating a fruit cake out here. But we've got all of these different treats for the holidays and not to villainize any of this stuff. We can have some of these things, we can dabble. But when we go too hot and heavy, alright, and we are just going from the candy cane interaction to it's turning to a

candy cane stripper pole, it's just too much, we're doing too much with the pole. [chuckle] Sorry. We've gotta be more mindful of our sugar intake. I'm a very visual person, so I just saw the whole thing. Alright, now with that being said, what are some of the other impacts of sugar, in particular in the evening, if we're gonna be mindful of having a silent night of great sleep quality, we wanna specifically be mindful of our blood sugar and our sugar consumption in the evening.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, why does this matter? Well, when we're consuming something that is higher in sugar closer to bedtime, we can of course get a sugar spike and we might even be so tired, we end up going to sleep a little bit later, maybe even an hour or two later, but we can drop into hypoglycemia during our sleep, so we get this sugar spike and then our blood sugar can go way too low while we're sleeping, we might not consciously wake up, but it can be enough to wake us about a sleep, but we might not consciously wake up, but it might pull us out of our specific sleep cycles that we need to rejuvenate our bodies and our brains. In particular, we can damage our REM sleep, our rapid eye movement sleep. This is where a lot of memory processing and cognitive healing and function take place, so memory processing is converting our memories like what you're learning right now into your short-term memory and helping to facilitate the activity of our glymphatic system, the glial cells in our brain, to clean out metabolic waste from our brain while we're sleeping. So there's a lot of cool stuff taking place that's going to get disrupted if we are having a blood sugar spike and then crash because we're going a little bit too hard with the Christmas goodies, the holiday goodies before bed.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, so now again, keep in mind, this does not at all mean that we can't have some holiday treats. And especially, again, and this is a random occasional thing, but when we're consistently doing this, this can definitely be disrupting our sleep quality. We wanna be up and enjoying the holidays to have good energy and to enjoy our friends and family, enjoy our time to recover and to recalibrate, and a big part of that is improving our sleep quality, and so whether we are having some Christmas cookies, for example, my wife just made some Christmas cookies. We had a meal, our dinner meal was whole real foods and recipes like what are in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook by the way and had a great dinner. Then we had some Christmas cookies. Alright. And having that along with... We just had some high quality protein and non starchy vegetables and things like that with the dinner, is going to reduce the glycemic load or the glycemic impact of those cookies, for example, but also the quality of things really helps as well.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The more ultra processed and refined the ingredients, which is what we tend to do obviously when we're making treats and things like that is going to show up more so with dysregulated blood sugar. And so just being mindful of certain things like this, and the real issue by the way, is excessive sugar from added sugar, alright, from highly refined

sugars, that is really the culprit. It's not all sugars creating sleep disruption. In particular, not the sugar found in nutrient-rich fruits, because people might be like, "Well, I can't have fruits in the evening then?" That's not the case at all. In fact, a four-week study cited in the Asia-Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition revealed that consuming two kiwi fruits in the evening led to improved sleep onset, meaning people fell asleep faster, improved sleep duration and improved sleep efficiency in adults with self-reported sleep disturbances.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, the key here is there's a plethora of sleep supportive nutrients in foods like kiwis, which we're gonna talk more about that shortly. But overall, for each of us, we just wanna be more mindful of not eating too many sweet treats close to bedtime. This does not mean that we can't dabble, alright, but also keep it in mind if it's around dinner and getting a real food nutrient-dense meal in and having a treat here or there, not an issue at all, alright, but we're talking specifically looking through the lens of improving and supporting our sleep quality, and that's the key, so number one is to lay off the candy canes late in the evening, but keep in mind whether it's a candy cane or even what we deem to be a healthy real food item. Maybe it's a sweet potato, for example, maybe it's the kiwi fruits that we talked about, maybe it's some apples, whatever the case might be, our bodies are going to respond differently versus someone else. We all have a unique metabolic fingerprint, a very unique microbial fingerprint as well.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We got trillions of bacteria that are interacting with these foods and determining how our body, how our blood sugar is responding. And so we cannot have a cookie-cutter method of knowing which foods are ideal for helping us to maintain a healthy blood sugar, and blood sugar variability is one of the key biomarkers for determining our health preventing disease and determining also how long we're going to live is deeply correlated with having good blood sugar management. So this year is the year to stop guessing how foods are impacting us. We can actually track this. Our blood sugar is something that we can track in realtime and provide personalized data on how various foods influence us, and also how things like sleep and sleep deprivation influence how our bodies are responding to certain foods as well. For this valuable information and what's helping hundreds of thousands of people right now, I personally use the CGMs provided by Levels.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So these continuous glucose monitors from Levels shows us in real time how food affects us, as compared to someone else, through these continuous glucose monitors, also Levels provide their incredible app that pairs with CGMs, these continuous glucose monitors, to give us personalized data in realtime, we could see how different things are impacting our blood sugar, and right now, Levels is providing listeners of The Model Health Show incredible access to their CGMs and their amazing Levels app. Go to levels.link/model. Go there right now, and when you get their annual membership, they're going to give you two months for free. So again, that's levels.link/model.

That's [LEVELS.link/model](https://levels.link/model). Go there right now and take advantage of this. Stop the guesswork. We can actually find out how various foods, how sleep, how stress impacts our blood sugar. Alright, get this data. Use this as empowerment as we head into the new year. These CGMs and the Levels app and the Levels team is phenomenal. There is nobody better in the world at giving us this data, this personalized data, so again, levels.link/model.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, moving on from number one on this list of five science-backed ways to have a silent night and improve our sleep quality, number one is to lay off the candy canes late in the evening, and the number two way to have a silent night and improve your sleep quality is to watch your favorite funny holiday movies.

SHAWN STEVENSON: A 2007 study published in the Journal of Psychosomatic Research, recruited mothers who were nursing infants to see if laughter would elevate blood levels and accordingly breast milk levels of melatonin. The study had the women watch either a funny movie for 90 minutes or a 90-minute weather information film. After watching the respective films, multiple breast milk samples were collected through the night and into the next morning. After compiling the data, the results found that laughter caused by viewing a humorous film significantly increased the levels of melatonin in the breast milk of these mothers. What's especially interesting about this study is that all of the infants of these moms were diagnosed with eczema, which was a notable sleep disruptor for the babies. The study also found that typical allergic reactions of these infants were reduced by feeding with breast milk, after laughter of their mothers. That's some magical stuff right there, very, very powerful. And a myriad of studies show that laughter is beneficial for better sleep from childhood all the way to our elderly years. A 2019 study titled beneficial effect of laughter therapy on physiological and psychological function in elders demonstrated some interesting benefits for seniors.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Study participants were seniors who attended an elderly day care center for a four-week study period, the seniors were able to attend a stand-up comedy performance once a week for those four weeks as laughter therapy. At the end of the study, it was revealed that laughter therapy resulted in a significant reduction in systolic blood pressure and heart rate, accompanied by a significant increase in plasma concentration of serotonin with serotonin being a precursor to making melatonin. Another study, a randomized controlled trial, published in the Journal of Geriatrics and Gerontology International, found that participants living in a senior group home who participated in laughter therapy had reductions in depression and improvements in their sleep quality. Laughter is truly a powerful mind-body experience, researchers at Wayne State University School of Medicine state that laughter and humor actually reduces levels of stress hormones such as epinephrine and cortisol in our bodies while simultaneously stimulating the

dopaminergic reward system, which is known to mediate pleasure and rewarding experiences.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Laughter is such a blessing, it's such a gift, and it's something that we have access to within our own bodies, within our own spirits, but sometimes with all the stresses of life, we can start to become a little bit callous and miss out on the humor and the joy and the laughter that we have access to, laughter truly is healing on so many different levels. There are mountains of studies affirming how laughter improves everything from cancer to heart disease, to obviously, today we're talking about improving our sleep quality. It is a medicine. It is truly, truly remarkable. And this time of year in particular, we get that time to gather around to watch some Christmas movies, Christmas classics, and also, of course, hanging out with friends and family, and in particular, we usually at least have one funny person in the family, but just hanging out with friends and family and laughing it up, having a good time is so healing and also funny enough, improves our sleep quality, and with that being said, I encourage you to think about what are your top five favorite funny holiday Christmas movies.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, keep in mind, I grew up in the '80s and '90s, so my list is gonna be for me. People get very passionate about their top Christmas movies. Alright, very passionate. It's one of those subjects. But for me. Alright, for me. My top five, I wanna share with you. Alright, maybe it might just remind you, like, "Oh yeah, I love that movie." Alright, I'm gonna share my top five. Alright, and this is specifically funny holiday movies, the shout out. 'It's a Wonderful Life.' There's so many great Christmas movies, I'm talking about the funny ones. Alright? Number one on the list, and it's number one period. 'Home Alone.' If it's not number one for you, I don't... What are you doing? Alright? 'Home Alone' is such a classic. Macaulay Culkin and just the idea of that movie. I even watched the making of that movie. I love it so much. There's like a special on Netflix, like how these movies were made, and just to hear the stories behind the stories is so wonderful, and that movie came along and changed the genre. It became an instant Christmas Classic, and this set a bar that has yet to be reached with any other Christmas movie, specifically through that lens of humor. So number one, 'Home Alone.'

SHAWN STEVENSON: Number two, 'Home Alone 2,' I mean how often does a sequel really measure up? High expectations, but this was also a magical experience for me because I was in eighth grade when it came out, and my school actually took the eighth graders on a field trip to the movie theaters to see it. Oh, such an incredible time. I had my little... Like the girl that you like, or whatever. Your eighth grade or whatever, and my friends, it's just as a vibe. You don't get to do that kind of stuff. And we watched the movie. It was hilarious. It was so funny. So 'Home Alone 1' is number one, the original. 'Home Alone 2' is number two on my list. Number three, 'The Grinch' starring Jim Carrey. Alright, it's not just for the jokes, 'The Grinch'

is one of those, you gotta go back and watch again, and then you pick up all the little subtle jokes man, there's so much humor throughout that movie, but also you just gotta respect that he put that fur on, alright, he put that fur on, it showed out and his facial expressions, his physical comedy, Jim Carrey is just GOAT status. Alright, so 'The Grinch' starring Jim Carrey is number three for me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Number four, now, this might get into some controversy. Alright, but it's for me. Number four, 'Jingle All The Way,' starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sinbad. Alright? That pair, who would have thought? Alright. Sinbad is another legend for sure. GOAT. I've been rocking with Sinbad since he was hosting Showtime at the Apollo, alright, and of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger being able to show up and he's had these comedy chops for quite some time, different movies, but this holiday classic and also had a superhero element to it. I really, really love that movie, and number five would be 'The Santa Clause,' alright, it's a double entendre, play on words, 'The Santa Clause' starring Tim Allen. So much humor, so many great jokes in that movie as well, just the concept. It's crazy, it's crazy. Tim Allen, he grew in popularity thanks to the TV show 'Home Improvement,' and Tim 'the tool man' Taylor, and for him to parlay from the world of stand-up comedy into this TV show and to get the starring role in this movie and really show up and show out. Awesome, awesome.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And by the way, honorable mention for a new, I feel is going to be a new holiday Christmas classic. It just came out a couple of days before the recording of this episode, and it's a new movie, holiday movie starring Eddie Murphy. Eddie... It's Eddie Murphy. Alright? But sometimes getting like, the bar is so high, you don't know is it gonna... Great movie, 'Candy Cane Lane.' 'Candy Cane Lane,' it was released for Amazon Prime, produced, released on that platform, I'm sure it'd be in other places eventually, but it was so good, so good. So many great laughs. I watched it with my family, actually last night because I was preparing for this show, and I was just like, "Let me dial it up. Let me add in. Let me see is there something else to add to the table?" I highly recommend checking it out. My youngest son, who's 12, loved it, he cracked up, he gave it a nine out of 10, alright. You know, these kids can be hard to impress, so it had elements of the new school vibe, old school vibe, all blended together. It's a pretty great movie.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, so what are your top five funny Christmas movies? If you're watching the YouTube version of this episode, put them below in the comment section, share, you might rekindle a memory for some of us, and also just saying, "Hey, this is a great funny movie to check out." As well, so share your top five in the comment sections below. Now again, keep in mind, in addition to watching a funny Christmas movie, which is a great time of year to do that, getting together with folks that you love and laughing and connecting and having a joyful time is what this season is supposed to be all about. So lean into that, be intentional about it, and go heavy on the laughter. Alright, moving on, we've got number

three on our list of five ways to have a silent night and improve your sleep quality, number three is to leave Santa some Reishi. Now, we know who the real Santa Claus is, I know the kids listen to the Model Health Show as well, but we know who Santa is. Us parents, we've met Santa before. Alright, and so kids, keep in mind, our parents, they know Santa, so make sure that you're rocking with your parents being on your best behavior.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, now with that being said, giving Santa instead of the conventional, some people leaving Santa some whiskey, some people leaving Santa some eggnog, instead of the conventional, if we're looking to have a silent night to improve our sleep quality. There is something so remarkable about sipping on some Reishi in the evening. A study that was published in the Journal of Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior, found that this renowned medicinal mushroom Reishi was able to significantly decrease sleep latency, meaning that it helped test subjects to fall asleep faster. It was found to improve overall sleep time and also found to improve non-REM deep sleep time and REM sleep time as well. Another recent study published in the Journal, BMC Microbiology sought out to uncover why Reishi medicinal mushroom appears to improve sleep quality even for individuals with diagnosed insomnia, but here was the key, why is it able to do this without all the well-documented side effects seen with other conventional sleep aids, namely sleep medications. Reishi is able to improve sleep quality without negative side effects.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The study titled exploration of the anti-insomnia mechanisms of Reishi looked at how reach impacts changes at the genetic level to bring about improved sleep quality. After their analysis, the researcher stated "Reishi mainly affects target genes and the pineal body amygdala nucleus, prefrontal cortex, cerebellum and other regions which regulate rhythm-related physiological processes." Sleep is all about the rhythms. So all about the rhythms, the circadian rhythms, and being able to efficiently go through our sleep cycles. Sleep is just something we do. We don't have to try to do it, most often, we have to get out of the way of what's disrupting the sleep quality, pulling those things out of the way. Our bodies know what to do if our bodies are presented and supported and put in the right conditions. And what Reishi appears to do is to actually target genes that influence how we're going through our sleep cycles, but not coming in as like a blunt instrument and knocking us over the head to knock us out.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is actually changing the conditions in the body, this is affecting our genes, it's affecting our microbiome, and this is thousands of years, thousands of years of data affirming this. This is very unique, and I'm not exaggerating this. We've got documentation, we're talking about ancient Chinese medicine, this has been utilized for a very, very long time, and our modern science is affirming what's been known for centuries. And so in addition to that, just to talk about how not only does this not have negative side effects and it's beneficial side effects, because we also wanna keep Santa healthy. Research

published in the Journal of Pharmacological Sciences has found that the polysaccharides found in Reishi have extensive immuno-modulating effects, including promoting the function of antigen-presenting cells, humoral immunity and cellular immunity. Another study citing the Journal Mediators of Inflammation, showed that Reishi was able to enhance the proliferation of T-cells and B-cells as well, so again, leaning into cellular immunity and also humoral immunity.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Many of these aspects are our immune system, yes, being able to target and take out pathogens, but also learning, being able to improve literally the memory of our immune cells so that they're more efficient at taking out foreign pathogens. Alright it develops an intelligence and humoral immunity so that we don't get sick from the same things again. It's such an important aspect of our health, and Reishi is able to do this. So really, really amazing. Obviously, Reishi is just in a different stratosphere, and again, I'm a big fan of not coming in with a blunt instrument and forcing ourselves to go into sleep, because we don't wanna get like a pseudo sleep, we wanna go through our sleep cycles efficiently and effectively, and this is why I'm a big fan of Reishi. And so, but the key is, where do you get it and get it with real efficacy, because a recent study was done finding that 80% to upwards of 90% of the medicinal mushroom products out there don't actually have the part of the mushroom or any mushroom at all, some of them didn't even have any, but the parts of the mushroom that create these therapeutic effects.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. The company that goes above and beyond, does a dual extraction of these medicinal mushrooms with Reishi, a hot water extract and an alcohol extract to get the beta-glucans, to get to triterpenes, to get all these different compounds that actually help to improve our health. And I'm talking about the folks at Four Sigmatic. Go to foursigmatic.com/model. That's FOURSIGMATIC.com/model. You're gonna get 10% off store-wide including their Reishi elixir. They also have a great Reishi hot cocoa that so many people are a huge fan of sipping on that in the evening, so when there's benefits there with that cacao as well, with the magnesium and tryptophan and other things that we're gonna talk a little bit more about soon, but all combined into one incredible beverage.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, keep in mind, if we're doing the Reishi elixir straight on its own, this is earthy. It's an earthy tea, alright. Nobody said it's delicious. Alright, but you could jazz it up a little bit, maybe adding some high quality fats of your choice, some Stevia, whatever the case might be, you could find a way or if you're just into, oh, this is a earthy kind of herbal tea that deeply improves my sleep quality and also my health overall, that's what you're gonna find by sipping on Reishi, and you will always find the Reishi elixir in my cabinet. So go to foursigmatic.com/model for 10% off store-wide, and now it's let's move on to number four on our list of five ways to have a silent night and improve our sleep quality.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And number four is to have a break from the Christmas lights before bedtime, is the season of lights, incredible displays on the outside of homes, the inside of homes, and even elaborate events of Christmas lights and adventures. Last year, my family and I actually went to Universal Studios around the holiday, and we saw a live performance of the Grinch, and it was the Jim Carrey version of it, and also a Harry Potter Hogwarts light display and other really cool things. Now, again, these are all wonderful and festive ways to celebrate the holiday, but whether it's Christmas time or in the middle of July. We need to give ourselves a break from the bright lights before we go to bed, if we want to have good sleep quality. Researchers at Cornell University, actually found that subjects who slept in an otherwise dark room by putting a light behind their knee, this was enough to create alterations in their sleep cycles. Our skin has photoreceptors that pick up light and send data to our brain and our organs. Our body is always looking to find out what time it is. Our circadian timing system, which are circadian clocks, these are found in every cell in our bodies, and our circadian clocks are themselves functional genes and proteins that control the function of our other genes and proteins, and our circadian clock is connected to the 24-hour solar day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We can't be unconnected or there's no way to disconnect ourselves from it, we can try. We can hide out, we can manufacture daytime at night now, in a way, we can also hide out from the natural light inputs during the day when we really need them. This is just gonna create disruption dysfunction, but our cells are always going to be seeking to sync up with this 24-hour solar day. We are part of this seemingly magical solar system, we are an incredible part of that, we are it. We can't not be connected to it, we are it, itself expressing through us, we are made of stardust, this is not an exaggeration, I'm not just saying it because it sounds cool, but we are made of these compounds from the solar system. It is incredible, and our bodies are tuned to that, and part of our big dysfunction is when we are not getting those natural inputs. And so having bright light exposure in the evening is well noted to increase our cortisol in the evening. And researchers at Harvard specifically affirm that the bright lights coming from our devices, our screens, our smartphones, laptops, television, that kind of stuff, increases our cortisol production abnormally in the evening and also suppresses the production of melatonin.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. It suppresses our melatonin production, and melatonin is... Unfortunately, it is labeled as the sleep hormone, and I'm saying that not to disrespect or disregard that melatonin is key in our sleep, but it does so much more, it's not just this one trick pony. Alright, melatonin is a powerful antioxidant hormone that dramatically improves the function of our immune system, that has a big role to play in the function of our metabolism, it's not just modulating our sleep, but it is critical in that as well, because melatonin is key for us to go through our sleep cycles efficiently to get all the juice out of the sleep, and so suppressing that by being on our devices lead into the evening, it's a big

problem in our culture today. This is something we've never been exposed to, has just been a large-scale human experiment the last couple of decades, and again, prior to that, 30, whatever years ago, 40 years, 50... We had television. Yeah. Alright. But also for some strange reason, families still tended to have this routine of people going to bed at a 'decent hour' but now the screens are just so pervasive and there's so much going on, they've got FOMO, Fear Of Missing Out at an all-time high.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And infinite access to any and everything you can imagine is just very, very difficult and new times that we're experiencing and we're not giving ourselves some grace as well to understand, when we find ourselves wrapped up in that stuff to say, "Hey, wait a minute, this is a new experience for not just for me, but the human species." And we've gotta figure out a way to navigate this because these things are so seductive, but as we're leaning into this, we're not saying to banish, again, I was talking about even hanging out, watching a Christmas movie last night. But ideally, if I'm trying to get to bed at say 10:30, I'm gonna watch the movie at 7:00. Alright? Movie is done by 9:00. Alright, wind down for an hour, get ready for whatever, or at minimum, I highly encourage you to give yourself at least a 30-minute screen curfew before going to bed.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Give yourself a 30-minute screen curfew. Alright, so often many of us, we find ourselves... The last thing we do before we go to bed is we're on our phone, and then we're just... Maybe we're too tired, we just go to bed, or we tell ourselves like, "I really should get to bed and stop staring at this screen." Or television, whatever the case might be, we've got to support ourselves, got to support our biology by giving ourselves a break and allowing our melatonin production to start to go up, cortisol to start to go down. Yes, we have brightness protection and different orange and red-colored frames and things like that, these are absolutely helpful, but this is still not addressing the most important thing, which is to get off of the stuff in the first place to help with that, because even if we've got these blue eye blocking glasses on and we're watching something stimulating and also understand there's still light that's coming through.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, the point is to wind down to unplug, so that we can plug into recovery, so we can plug into rejuvenation and healing, we gotta unplug from these devices, and so within that 30-minute time span an hour is even better, we've gotta replace that with something of equal or greater value than being on our phone or watching another show on Netflix, so whether that's listening to an incredible podcast, whether that's listening to an audio book, whether it's having a conversation with a family member or a friend, whatever the case might be, reading a book. Alright, some people love reading books, there's still physical books out here on the streets. Alright, they're still out here. This can also be a time for connection, for intimate connection with your significant other. Alright, this could be a time for other types of gifts, it's the holidays, it's all about giving. Alright, and by the way,

that's been found to improve our sleep quality as well, so again, this isn't about abandoning the fact that we are living at this time when we have access to this technology, that's awesome, and we can actually enjoy that stuff, but we've gotta keep it in its proper perspective, in its proper place and not allowing it to control our lives.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So number four on this list again was to have a break from the Christmas lights before bedtime. Alright moving on to number five on our list of five ways to have a silent night and improve your sleep quality, number five is to eat plenty of good sleep nutrients during the holidays. We can have the best evening routine, we can have the best mattress and sheets, and the dark room and all the things, but if we're deficient in the actual nutrients that build our sleep-related hormones and neurotransmitters, we're still going to have disruptions in our sleep quality. We have to have the compounds that actually build the things that help us to sleep, and so this is one of the key issues that I saw working as a nutritionist for many years, is certain nutrient deficiencies. Once we address those things, people's sleep quality improves like that. And so what are some of these good sleep nutrients to make sure that we're including during the holidays. We're gonna go through a few of these, one of them is tryptophan. This is one of the essential amino acids that we must obtain from our diet, tryptophan stands out as a key building block for better sleep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: A tryptophan deficiency has been found to create disruptions in our REM sleep specifically, while improving tryptophan levels has been shown to reduce wakefulness at night and increase mental alertness after waking up in the morning, according to research cited in the Journal Nutrients. Now, here's why this is, one of the big reasons why, I mentioned serotonin is a precursor to making melatonin earlier. Tryptophan is a precursor to making serotonin. Alright, so this is like the opening, opening act, so that's one of the major reasons why tryptophan is so remarkable as this essential amino acid that we must obtain through our diet. Now, here's the key when it comes to tryptophan, your body needs copious amounts of tryptophan because tryptophan is also involved in a lot of things to do with managing and modulating stress, and so our bodies use quite a bit of it. So what are some of the best sources of tryptophan? Well, during this time of year, people tend to think about tryptophan when they think about tryptophan, if they think about tryptophan, it's often related to turkey, alright, the holiday turkey and the sleepiness that is often associated, the stereotype with eating turkey and getting sleepy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it's not the turkey, nobody's just raw dogging the turkey, just going turkey without anything else, without the fixings, alright, so it's not the turkey that's usually causing the itis after Thanksgiving dinner, after Christmas dinner, obviously we're eating a tremendous amount of carbohydrate dense foods, whether it's the candied yams and the stuffing and the pies and whatever else, there's so many wonderful tasty things, but blaming the turkey is not the way to go about it, but there's more foods than just the turkey, by the

way, where we could find a really dense source of tryptophan and others include chicken, lobster, eggs, cheese, tofu, chocolate, spinach, pumpkin seeds, peanuts, and one of my favorites, spirulina. These are all viable sources of tryptophan. Alright, so during this time of year, again, number five is to eat plenty of good sleep nutrients during the holidays, so make sure that we are specifically being purposeful in getting in healthy amounts of tryptophan.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Another one of these important good sleep nutrients is featured in the journal *Appetite* and also the journal *PLoS One*, Public Library of Science One, demonstrating that insufficient intake of vitamin C increases the likelihood of sleep disturbances and shortens the duration of overall sleep time. There are other studies affirming that vitamin C could actually help to support and reduce the frequency of sleep apnea as well, and several other aspects of improving our sleep quality and helping the body to modulate and reduce stress. That's really the key. And so I'm a huge advocate of making sure that we're getting plenty of food-based vitamin C, especially during this time of year, but it's important for people to realize that all vitamin C is not the same, synthetic vitamin C simply does not function in the same way, that food-based vitamin C does. A study that was published in the *Journal of Cardiology* had test subjects that were exposing themselves to a pretty strong stressor, in this case, it was smoking to utilize food-based vitamin C versus a synthetic form of vitamin C that you'll find in all these supplements out there on store shelves.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the researchers, after compiling the data, they found that by utilizing food-based vitamin C specifically, it was from this vitamin C dense super fruit called camu camu berry, that the test subjects had a significant reduction in inflammatory biomarkers while taking the synthetic vitamin C led to no changes, there was no protective benefit from taking that synthetic vitamin C. Now, not to say that there's no benefit at all for synthetic forms, but why not get the good stuff, the real stuff, and we can obviously go for these superfoods like camu camu berry, amla berry, acerola cherry. These are superstars when it comes to vitamin C, but everyday foods like bell peppers, green leafy vegetables, broccoli, kiwi, strawberries, citrus, papaya and more, have notable sources of vitamin C, But the soil quality that these things are grown in is important, making sure that we're getting organic versions of these things because dealing with these pesticides and all these other things. This is zapping, this is zapping the vitamins from our bodies truly. Are adrenal glands when under stress, and this includes diet stress, toxin exposure is just dumping out copious amounts of vitamin C to help to buffer these stressors, it's so important in helping our bodies to manage stress.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, with this being said, this is why for me, one of the few supplements that I especially if I'm traveling dealing with a lot of stress, one of my favorite supplements is the essential C complex from PaleoValley, this has camu camu berry as noted in that study, this has as acerola cherry, this has amla berry, the three most nutrient-dense

vitamin C dense super fruits in the world with no binders, fillers, it's all organic. It's done in the right way. I really, really love this incredible product, I love PaleoValley, these folks are amazing, they've been amazing, incredible people and very supportive of my work. Highly encourage you to check them out. If You're gonna get a vitamin C supplement, this is the one you need to have in your cabinet. Go to paleovalley.com/model, you're going to get 15% off their essential C complex, and also they're giving me 15% off store-wide, that's PALEOVALLEY.com/model. Paleovalley.com/model for 15% off. Definitely, especially during this time of year. Check out their essential C complex. Now, these are just a couple of these critical good sleep nutrients that are required in order to build our sleep-related hormones and neurotransmitters. I'm gonna share one more with you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This one is super important. A 2016 study reported that magnesium is able to reduce the activity of your sympathetic fight-or-flight nervous system and turn on the activity of your parasympathetic, rest and digest nervous system. Another study published in pharmacological reports states that magnesium is able to interact with inhibitory GABA receptors and induce anti-anxiety effects. Another double-blind placebo-controlled study published in 2012 found that improving magnesium levels appears to improve sleep efficiency, improve melatonin function, reduce cortisol and reduce wake after sleep onset. Excellent sources of magnesium include avocados, pumpkin seeds, almonds, dark chocolate, leafy greens, black beans, fatty fish and spirulina. These are just some of the sources that are a great place to find magnesium. Alright, so again, especially during this time of year, if we wanna make sure that we are having a silent night and improving our sleep quality, you wanna eat plenty of good sleep nutrients during the holidays.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I appreciate you so much for tuning in to this episode, and I'm wishing you a very, very happy holiday, a healthy holiday and a time of joy and connection, and being able to recalibrate and rest and heal and head into this new year with power, with intention, and being able to write an incredible new chapter and being that this is a season of giving, please share this out, share this out with somebody that you care about, who you wanna support their health and wellness, and you can send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on, or just take a screenshot of this episode and tag me, I'm @Shawnmodel on Instagram, and that would really, really mean a lot just to share this out. Sharing is caring. And listen, we've got some epic master classes and world class guests coming away very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the modelhealthshow.com, that's where you can find all of the show notes, you could find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well, and please make sure to head over to iTunes and give us a rating to

let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much, and take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.