

THE WOMAN WITHIN

# Calm by Design

A ROOT-CAUSE SLEEP 6-PART PLAN  
YOU CAN COUNT ON



BY BERTA AZZI

A calm, no-drama routine that improves your “soil” — lifestyle and environment — so your body is better set up for reliable sleep.

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## HOW THIS GUIDE WORKS

### **Small and Steady**

Follow 6 simple parts. Spend about a week on each, or longer if helpful. Use the printable checklist at the end to track what feels steady. Focus on causes in your daily inputs — not band-aid fixes.

### **Root-Cause Lens**

Our lifestyle and environment are like the soil for health. We improve the soil to support better outcomes and avoid the lifelong cycle of symptom management.

*Singh S, Kshetriya S, Valk R. Health, Hope, and Harmony (2023).*

### **Kind Reminder**

This is lifestyle education, not medical care. If you have significant sleep or mood concerns, or are changing medications, consult your clinician.

## Part 1

# Clarify Your Why, How, When, What

**FOCUS** Know what truly contributes to tough nights so you can make small, targeted changes without drama.

### WHY IT'S ROOT-CAUSE ALIGNED

Investigate “why, how, when, what” rather than chase symptoms. This reflective guide prevents wasted effort and supports calm, confident action.

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

#### 10-minute reflection map:

- Why steady sleep matters to me right now (energy for mornings, patience with family, clearer thinking)?
- When do nights go off the rails? Mark common times or triggers (late screen time, heavy evening meal, stressful conversations, late caffeine).
- What helps even a little (dim lamp, herbal tea, reading, earlier dinner, light stretch)?

#### Choose just 1–2 “soil” factors to address first. Circle them. Examples:

- Screens and bright light after 9pm.
- Afternoon caffeine or evening alcohol.
- Irregular wind-down timing.

#### Set your “good-enough” aim for this week:

- I'll start wind-down at:
- I'll park my phone by:
- I'll keep a gentle note of what preceded good and tough nights.

# Part 1

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## COMMUNITY CUE

Share one pattern you noticed with a trusted friend or group. The goal is not advice — just “*I noticed X often comes before a tough night.*” Feeling seen reduces pressure.

## WHAT TO NOTICE

- A few repeating contributors you can influence.
- Less self-blame; more clarity about simple next steps.

### Gentle self-talk

“Tonight is practice,  
not a test. Small clarity  
now prevents big  
confusion later.”

## Part 2

# Make Evenings Low-Stimulation and Predictable

**FOCUS** Create a reliable wind-down window that says “night” to your body and mind.

### WHY IT'S ROOT-CAUSE ALIGNED

Environment is the soil. Predictable evening cues reduce arousal at the source—no band-aid needed.

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

**Set a 45-60 minute wind-down window. Choose a start time you can keep 4-5 nights.**

**Dim and quiet:**

- Switch to warm, lower lights.
- Park devices away from the bed; if needed, set a “done for today” alarm.

**Choose your 2-step cue routine (keep it the same nightly):**

- Example A: Lamp + decaf tea + 10 pages of a calm book.
- Example B: Lamp + 5 gentle stretches + journaling three lines: *“What I did,” “What can wait,” “What I’m grateful for.”*

**Gentle closure ritual (2 minutes):**

- Say out loud: *“The day is finished. Anything important returns tomorrow.”* This gives the brain a tidy, steady ending.

## Part 2

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### COMMUNITY CUE

Invite a family member into the dim-lights routine.

A shared cue (e.g., everyone switches a lamp on) creates a supportive, low-drama team rhythm.

### WHAT TO NOTICE

- Falling asleep feels less “on edge.”
- Fewer last-minute tasks at bedtime.

### Gentle self-talk

“I make night predictable, so my body doesn’t have to guess.”

## Part 3

# Tidy Up Stimulants and Night Disruptors

**FOCUS** Reduce dietary inputs caffeine, alcohol, and late sugar that commonly fragment sleep.

### WHY IT'S ROOT-CAUSE ALIGNED

Adjusting inputs targets the cause of wakefulness rather than layering quick fixes. It also saves money on unnecessary supplements.

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

#### Caffeine boundary:

- Pick a personal cut-off you can keep 5–6 days (e.g., none after 1–2 pm).
- If sensitive, reduce total cups by one this week.

#### Alcohol boundary:

- Try alcohol-free on most nights (e.g., 5 of 7). If you drink, keep it earlier and lighter.

#### Late sugar swap:

- Replace dessert with something steadier (yoghurt + berries, small nut butter toast, herbal tea with milk).

#### Dinner timing:

- Aim for finishing dinner 2–3 hours before bed most nights. If late, keep it lighter.

# Part 3

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## COMMUNITY CUE

Share one swap idea with your circle (“*Evening herbal tea instead of wine*”) and ask for theirs. Friendly accountability supports steadiness.

## WHAT TO NOTICE

- Fewer 2–4 am wake-ups.
- Less groggy early morning feel.

### Gentle self-talk

“I’m not restricting—  
I’m choosing steadier  
inputs for steadier  
nights.”

## Part 4

# Create a Supportive Daily Environment (“Soil”)

**FOCUS** Small daytime anchors that set up calm nights.

### WHY IT'S ROOT-CAUSE ALIGNED

Better soil, better outcomes. These aren't sleep hacks; they're gentle day-to-night

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

#### **Morning outside light:**

- A brief outdoor moment most mornings (even 5–10 minutes) to signal “day.” Stand on the step, open curtains wide, or take a short walk.

#### **Breakfast anchor:**

- Combine protein + fiber: eggs and wholegrain toast; yoghurt, fruit, and nuts; oats with seeds. Aim to avoid mid-morning crashes that push afternoon caffeine.

#### **Mini-unwind in the afternoon:**

- 5–10 minutes of quiet: legs up the couch, breathe out longer than in, write a few lines to “empty the head.” This prevents evening overload.

#### **Gentle movement (optional):**

- A short walk, light stretch, or a few mobility moves—choose what feels kind.

# Part 4

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## COMMUNITY CUE

Pair the morning light with a friend's voice note or a brief text check-in: "Got my light in, how about you?" Belonging makes habits stick.

## WHAT TO NOTICE

- More even daytime energy.
- Evenings feel less mentally crowded.

## Gentle self-talk

“Small anchors by day steady the water at night.”

## Part 5

# A Calm Plan for Night Wake-Ups

**FOCUS** Respond steadily so wakefulness doesn't spiral into stress.

### WHY IT'S ROOT-CAUSE ALIGNED

We're not patching symptoms; we're reducing arousal and letting sleep return when it's ready.

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

#### If awake and alert after a while

- Sit up in low light (or move to a quiet chair).
- Breathe out longer than in (e.g., in 4, out 6–8) for a few minutes.
- Read a few calm pages or listen to soft instrumental audio.
- Return to bed when drowsy.

#### Gentle boundaries

- Cover the clock; avoid “*doing the maths.*”
- Keep the room comfortable (cool, quiet, dark enough).

#### If thoughts race:

- “*Name and park*” them on paper: “*This is planning; it can wait.*” Place the note face down.

# Part 5

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## COMMUNITY CUE

If helpful, agree with a partner that night-time is a non-problem-solving zone. A shared understanding removes pressure and protects calm.

## WHAT TO NOTICE

- Shorter wake periods.
- Less frustration the morning after.

### **Gentle self-talk**

“Wakefulness  
happens. I know  
what to do, and that’s  
enough.”

## Part 6

# Keep What Works; Skip the Fads

**FOCUS** Choose maintainables and avoid the never-ending fix cycle.

### WHY IT'S ROOT-CAUSE ALIGNED

Save time and money by treating causes instead of buying band-aids. Your personal “minimums” keep progress steady without perfectionism.

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

#### Pick your 3 minimums:

- Example: Wind-down starts 9:30pm; caffeine cut-off 1 pm; afternoon mini-unwind most days.

#### Define your 2 most common triggers and your steady response:

- Trigger: Late blue-light scroll. Response: Phone docked in kitchen at 9:15pm.
- Trigger: Stressful evening email. Response: Add to “tomorrow list” and close laptop at 9pm.

#### “Pause before purchase” practice:

- Before buying a new sleep thing, ask: Why/How/When/What contributed this week? Is there a soil tweak I can try first?

# Part 6

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## COMMUNITY CUE

Share your three minimums with your group and check in on Fridays: “Which one felt easiest? Which needs support?” Celebrate steadiness, not perfection.

## WHAT TO NOTICE

- A dependable weekly rhythm.
- Fewer urgencies, more confidence.

### Gentle self-talk

“I keep it simple and steady. That’s what lasts.”

# Resources & Notes

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Use this page to jot insights from each part and the patterns you discover.

## MY KEY PATTERNS

## MY THREE MINIMUMS

## TRIGGERS TO WATCH + MY STEADY RESPONSE

# Printable Weekly Checklist: Calm by Design

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Print and keep by your bedside.

Check what feels steady.

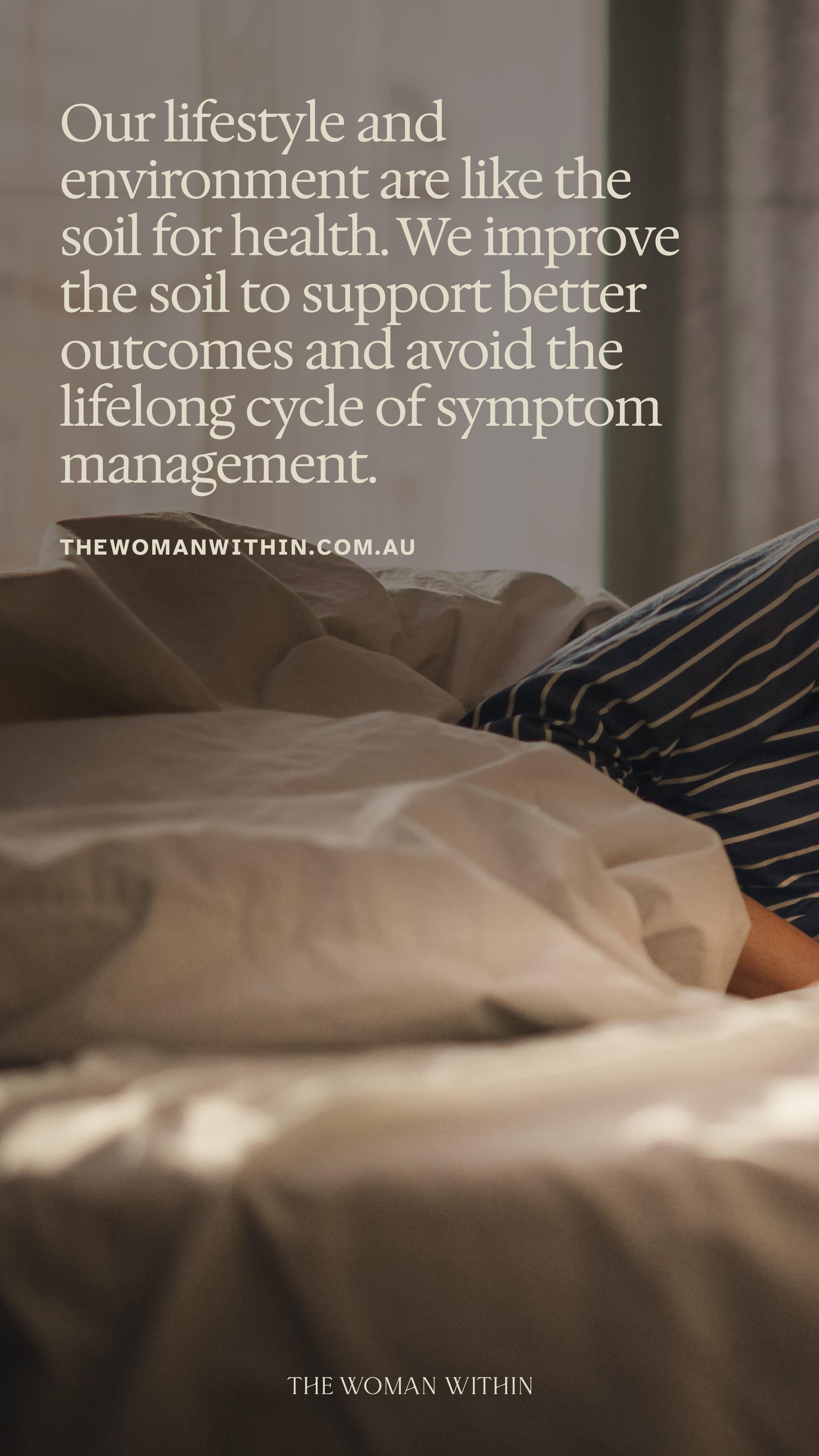
Start any week.

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Wind-down started on time							
Lights dimmed + phone parked							
Caffeine cut-off respected							
Alcohol-free evening							
Morning outdoor light (min)							
Afternoon unwind (5-10 min)							

## NOTES

What helped? What I'll keep next week.

*Calm colours and gentle language are intentional for a low-drama experience. Start where you are; small and steady wins.*



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