



Melatonin isn't a sleeping pill—it's a **timing hormone**. And most people use it wrong.

Taking melatonin at the wrong time or in excessive doses can [disrupt your circadian rhythm](#) and cause grogginess the next day. But when paired with the right **neurochemical stack**, you can support your brain's natural sleep chemistry and optimize melatonin production **without dependency**.

Timing Supplements with Biological Rhythms

Your brain is already wired to produce melatonin in the evening **if** the right environmental and chemical conditions are met. Instead of relying on high-dose melatonin (which can desensitize receptors), combine **low-dose support with natural precursors and calming agents**.

Here's the **Huberman-recommended sleep stack**, timed to match your body's natural rhythms:

Supplement	Timing	Function
Magnesium glycinate	~1 hour before bed	Calms the nervous system, supports GABA activity
L-theanine	~1 hour before bed	Increases alpha brain waves → relaxation without sedation
Glycine	~1 hour before bed	Lowers core body temperature, promotes deeper sleep

Apigenin	~1 hour before bed	Natural anxiolytic (from chamomile), reduces stress
<i>(Optional)</i> Low-dose melatonin (0.3–1 mg)	~60–90 min before target sleep time	Shifts circadian phase slightly (helpful for jet lag or shift work)

“Most people overdose on melatonin and take it too late—it’s not a sedative. It’s a chronoshifter. These other compounds support real relaxation and sleep depth.”

— Dr. Andrew Huberman, [Sleep Toolkit – Huberman Lab](#)

Natural Cues to Stack With

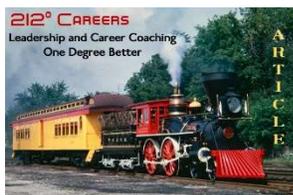
Supplement stacks work best **when combined with behavioral cues** that signal your nervous system: *“It’s time to shut down.”* These are simple, low-effort practices that reinforce your body’s natural sleep drive and **decrease pre-bed cortisol and arousal**.

Here are some **powerful natural cues** to layer into your wind-down routine:

- **Breathwork**
Try slow nasal breathing or the **4-7-8 technique** (inhale 4 sec → hold 7 sec → exhale 8 sec) to activate the **parasympathetic nervous system** and slow your heart rate.
- **Dim light + cool temperature**
Mimics natural sunset cues and supports **melatonin production** and a **drop in core body temperature**.
- **Light stretching or gratitude journaling**
Gentle movement helps lower muscular tension, while gratitude journaling reduces cortisol levels and helps reframe anxious thoughts before bed.

Sleep Stack Matrix: Supplements + Natural Cues

Tool / Practice	Timing	Primary Effect	Contraindications / Cautions
Magnesium glycinate	1 hr before bed	Calms the nervous system, enhances GABA	May cause GI upset in high doses
L-theanine	1 hr before bed	Promotes relaxed focus, reduces anxiety	Avoid if overly sedating for your system
Glycine	1 hr before bed	Lowers body temp, improves sleep depth	Monitor if prone to lightheadedness
Apigenin	1 hr before bed	Natural anxiolytic, lowers cortisol	Can interact with some medications (e.g., blood thinners)
Low-dose melatonin	60–90 min before sleep	Shifts circadian timing, aids jet lag	Avoid high doses; they can blunt natural production
Breathwork (4-7-8)	5–10 min before sleep	Activates the parasympathetic system	Start gradually if prone to dizziness
Dim lights	Sunset onward	Supports melatonin, reduces alerting blue light	Avoid bright screens during this time
Cool room (65°F / 18°C)	1–2 hrs before sleep	Supports body temp drop, enhances SWS	Don't overcool—it can cause wake-ups
Stretching or journaling	30–60 min before bed	Reduces stress chemistry, promotes calm	Avoid intense exercise too close to bed



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