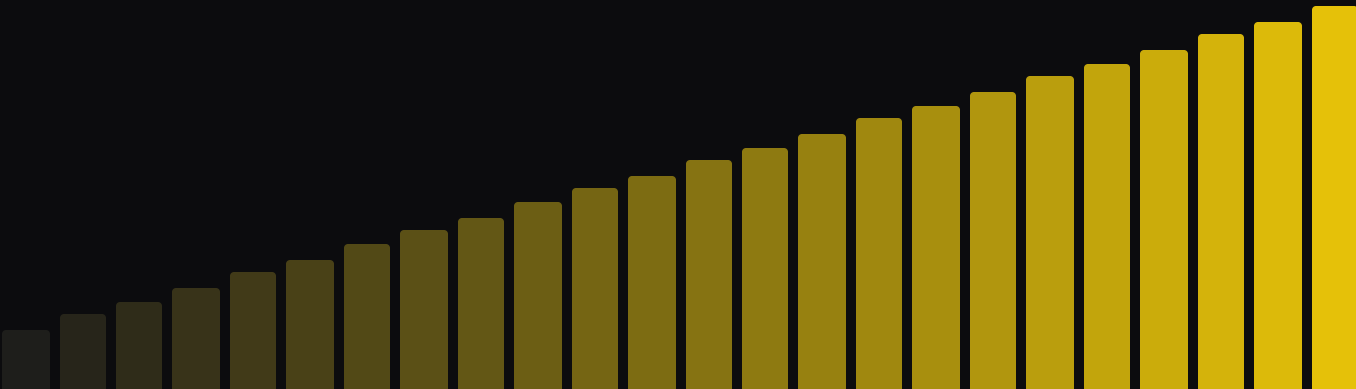


THE SLEEP PROTOCOL I'M USING

TWO YEARS OF MY OWN DATA

5h 28m to **6h 49m**

Average nightly sleep, 2024 to 2026. Not perfect. Measurably better.



THE PREMISE

Sleep is the foundation. Everything else is decoration. This is the system I am using to close the gap between where my numbers are and where I want them, and every rule in it is one I am still working on.

You do not have to do all nine. Pick two or three tonight, start collecting data, improve from there.

MY NUMBERS

Calculated from my Apple Watch sleep records, April 2024 through August 2026. Sleep sessions with under three hours recorded were excluded as likely partial recordings.

BEFORE YOU READ THE NINE, FILL IN YOUR ROW

PERIOD	AVG SLEEP		AWAKE	WAKE-UPS	7.5H+
2024		5h 28m	28m	6.4	6%
2025		6h 11m	27m	6.3	15%
2026 YTD		6h 49m	37m	5.1	27%
Last 30		6h 58m	32m	5.1	32%

YOUR LAST 30

Open your tracker and pull your last 30 days. Average sleep, and what percentage of nights hit seven and a half hours. It takes two minutes and it changes what the rest of this document is for.

Roughly 81 more minutes a night than my 2024 recorded baseline. I have not fixed my sleep. I have moved it, and I can prove the direction.

READ THE NUMBERS HONESTLY

WHAT MOVED IT

The biggest change was protecting more time for sleep. The data does not point to one magic intervention. From 2024 to 2025, much of the gain came from sleeping later. In 2026, my sleep start has also moved earlier. The result is a longer sleep window. I cannot tell you one change caused the improvement. I can show you that the window expanded and the numbers moved with it.

THE CAVEAT

One caveat on the 2024 baseline: my Apple Watch sleep record begins in April, and tracking was less consistent then. Some short nights may still represent incomplete recordings even after excluding sessions under three hours. The exact baseline has noise. The direction of the trend does not.

STILL BROKEN

Consistency is still the gap. My target is seven and a half hours. In 2026 year to date, about 27 percent of my recorded nights get there. Over the last 30 days, that has improved to about 32 percent. This is not a protocol from someone claiming perfection. It is the system I am using to close that gap.

THE NINE RULES

Three of these carry the most weight. They are marked. Start there if you only start somewhere.

01

START HERE

PROTECT 7.5+ HOURS

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society both put the floor at seven or more hours a night. Protect seven and a half hours of opportunity so you actually land there. Keep bedtime and wake time reasonably consistent, weekends included, within about an hour whenever life allows.

Catching up on the weekend does not appear to clear the debt. In a University of Colorado Boulder study, the weekend catch-up group came out with worse muscle and liver insulin sensitivity than the group that simply stayed tired.

02

BUILD A ONE-HOUR LANDING ZONE

The last hour before bed should lower stimulation, not raise it. Dim the lights. Screens off thirty to sixty minutes before sleep. Read if you are not ready to sleep yet. Do not use that hour to solve tomorrow's problems.

03

TREAT ALCOHOL AS A SLEEP DISRUPTOR

Alcohol makes falling asleep easier and makes the rest of the night worse. Avoid it within three to four hours of bed when sleep quality matters. This is not about never drinking. It is about alcohol being an intentional exception instead of an automatic evening habit.

04 **FRONT-LOAD CAFFEINE**

Coffee stays. Timing is the behavior that matters. A meta-analysis of 24 studies found caffeine cuts total sleep time by an average of 45 minutes, and that a standard coffee should be finished at least 8.8 hours before bed to avoid that cost. A separate trial found 400mg taken six hours before bed cost participants a full hour of sleep. For most bedtimes, that means finishing caffeine by around noon.

05 **MAKE THE BEDROOM BORING**

Cool, dark, quiet. The Sleep Foundation puts the range at 65 to 68 degrees and the Cleveland Clinic at 60 to 67. Start near 65 and adjust from there. Cover or remove unnecessary light. Blackout curtains or an eye mask if you need them. Consistent white noise beats intermittent sound. Keep the phone away from the bed when you can. One exception worth knowing: research on adults over 65 found peak sleep efficiency higher, in the 68 to 77 degree range.

06 **TRACK TRENDS, NOT SCORES**

Apple Watch and Apple Health is the system I use, and it is where every number on page one came from. Watch total sleep, bedtime and wake consistency, awakenings, REM and core and deep trends, heart rate, respiratory rate, and how you actually feel the next day. Do not let one metric, especially estimated deep sleep, decide whether you slept well. Wearable awakening counts in particular are noisy and are not the same as consciously waking up. Look for patterns across weeks.

07 **NAPS ARE A TOOL, NOT A ROUTINE**

Do not nap routinely just because you are tired. If recovery genuinely calls for one, keep it to twenty or thirty minutes and take it before 3 PM.

08

WHEN IT GOES WRONG

ONE BAD NIGHT DOES NOT CHANGE THE SYSTEM

Do not chase bad sleep. Get up around your normal time. Get daylight. Move. Keep caffeine early. Skip the giant afternoon nap. Then return to your normal bedtime. After several poor nights in a row, prioritize an earlier bedtime and more sleep opportunity. The objective is restoring the rhythm, not creating a second problem trying to fix the first.

And if you have been off this for weeks or months, do not restart all nine. Fix the wake time first, hold it seven days, and let the bedtime follow. A long lapse is not a failed protocol, it is a protocol you get to restart with one change instead of nine.

09

THE ORDER OF OPERATIONS

FIX THE FUNDAMENTALS BEFORE THE HACKS

Before another supplement, wearable, or complicated routine, work the order that actually moves the needle. Sleep opportunity, then schedule, then caffeine, then alcohol, then screens and light, then the bedroom, then tracking. Optimize past those only once the basics are consistent.

1 SLEEP OPPORTUNITY

2 SCHEDULE

3 CAFFEINE

4 ALCOHOL

5 SCREENS AND LIGHT

6 BEDROOM

7 TRACKING

SOURCES

7 REFERENCES

01 SLEEP DURATION FLOOR

Watson NF et al. Recommended amount of sleep for a healthy adult: a joint consensus statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Sleep Research Society. SLEEP, 2015.

03 CAFFEINE TIMING AND DOSE

Gardiner C et al. The effect of caffeine on subsequent sleep: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Sleep Medicine Reviews, 2023.

05 BEDROOM TEMPERATURE

Sleep Foundation, Best Temperature for Sleep. Cleveland Clinic, What Is the Ideal Sleeping Temperature for My Bedroom.

07 MY OWN NUMBERS

Apple Watch sleep records, April 2024 through August 2026, excluding sessions with under three hours recorded.

02 WEEKEND CATCH-UP SLEEP

Depner CM, Wright KP et al. Ad libitum weekend recovery sleep fails to prevent metabolic dysregulation during a repeating pattern of insufficient sleep and weekend recovery sleep. Current Biology, 2019.

04 CAFFEINE SIX HOURS BEFORE BED

Drake C, Roehrs T, Shambroom J, Roth T. Caffeine effects on sleep taken 0, 3, or 6 hours before going to bed. Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine, 2013.

06 TEMPERATURE IN OLDER ADULTS

Baniassadi A et al. Nighttime ambient temperature and sleep in community-dwelling older adults. Science of the Total Environment, 2023.

HOW TO READ ANY OF THIS

Sleep stage estimates and sleep scores vary by device and by person. Every source above says the same thing: read wearable data as a trend, not as a lab measurement. If you snore loudly, wake up gasping, feel dangerously sleepy during the day, or your sleep does not improve after honestly working these basics, that is a conversation with a clinician, not a purchase.

This is general education from my own experience, not medical advice, and I am not a doctor. If you have a health condition, are pregnant, or take medication, talk to a clinician before changing your sleep, caffeine, or alcohol habits.

MY NEXT TARGET

7.5+ HOURS, CONSISTENTLY.



I am at about 32 percent of nights over the last 30 days. That is the number I am working on next, and it is the reason this document exists at all. Not nine rules executed perfectly. An environment where good sleep is more likely, tracked so I know whether it is working, and adjusted when it is not.

Pick two or three tonight. Start collecting data. Improve from there.

Reply with your row and the two you are starting tonight. I read every message. I am still working on this too, so follow along as I test what actually moves the numbers.

Counted it? What comes off first is a decision, not a number.

100YEARMAN.COM/BRIEF

EXIT AUTOPILOT.

BUILD DELIBERATELY.

BUILT FOR 100.
