

Simplified Speech #102 – Nighttime routines

Episode description

Do you do the same things every evening after work? What do you do when you're getting ready for bed? In this episode, Andrew and Jeremy discuss their nighttime routines and how things change when you have a family.

Fun fact

Sleep experts say that having a nighttime routine will help you sleep better. A nighttime routine signals to your mind and body that it's time to go to bed, and also gives you time to relax so you'll fall asleep faster and sleep better.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Outsider's perspective
- I would say
- Set/rough routine
- To make gains
- Drive [one] bonkers
- To toss and turn



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello, everyone. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And this is Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to the Culips English Podcast.

Andrew: We've got a Simplified Speech episode for you today, everyone. And if you're new to Culips and you don't know what Simplified Speech is, well, let me explain. It is our series of features clear, natural, and easy-to-understand conversations. And today I'm joined by my cohost, Jeremy. Hey there, Jeremy.

Jeremy: Hey there, Andrew. So today we are going to talk about nighttime routines.

Andrew: Nighttime routines, yeah.

Jeremy: But before we get into that, I just want to remind everyone that there is a study guide for this episode available for all Culips members. We recommend following along with the study guide as you listen. Just visit Culips.com to find out how to download it.

Andrew: And if you're not a Culips member yet but you'd like to check out our study guides and see why they are such an awesome resource for studying English, then all you have to do is visit Culips.com. And where you want to navigate to, everyone, is you should select the Study Guide Samples option from the Membership menu, and then you're actually able to download and check out six free study guide samples. Take a look and I think you're gonna love them.

Jeremy: So in this episode, we are talking about nighttime routines. And I think the first thing that would be helpful to mention to our listeners is that the word nighttime is actually one word.

Andrew: Yeah. So this is one of those interesting spellings in English where we can put night and time together to make one word. And when you read this word, it actually looks a little bit strange because there are two Ts in the middle of the word, right? Night ends with a T and time begins with a T. And so when we put this word together and spell it, there are those two Ts right in the middle of the word. It kind of looks a little strange.

Jeremy: And there are other words like this that have time attached to the end, like bedtime and daytime. So, anyway, let's talk about what nighttime means. **I would say** that nighttime usually begins after you finish work, probably around dinnertime. That is the beginning of nighttime. And in different parts of the world, it doesn't always get dark at the same time, so it doesn't necessarily mean darkness.

Andrew: Yeah, I think for this episode, we're talking about nighttime routines. Let's set our definition as starting at 5 pm, Jeremy. So we'll go from 5 pm to bedtime. We'll talk about this nighttime period, because I think 5 pm is traditionally the end of the workday. Although, you know, these days, I don't personally know too many people that stop working at 5 pm. And if I could do that, I would love it. I'm jealous of people who get to stop working at 5 pm, that sounds awesome.

Andrew: But, OK, let's get into our personal routines, Jeremy. Now I know you have a young son. How old is he now? Two, three years old, a little toddler, right?

Jeremy: Yeah, he's almost three.

Andrew: Almost three. So I imagine—now I'm saying this from **an outsider perspective**, because I don't have children—but I would imagine that you have a pretty standard routine for nighttime with your son. Is that true?

Jeremy: Yeah, **I would say** that we do a little bit less routine than other people we know. But, in general, this is how our routine goes. We have dinner and, after dinner, we will usually give him a bath or shower. And after that, we read a book to him and then we put him to bed, or we help him go to sleep, put him to bed. After that, my wife and I will do some chores around the house and get ready for bed ourselves. We usually brush our teeth, wash our face, shower if we need to, and read a book before we go to bed, until we fall asleep.

Andrew: OK, so you have, sounds like, more of a **set routine** than I do.

Jeremy: What is your nighttime routine like? Or do you have a routine?

Andrew: I have a very **rough routine**, I have a very **rough routine**, which means that, a **rough routine** means that I have some guidelines and I have some things that I would like to do but that I don't always achieve. You know, I actually think that routines can be really powerful in our lives, especially when we have goals that we are trying to work towards.

Jeremy: Definitely.

Andrew: So in my life, I have some goals, like learning Korean and becoming a faster runner and becoming a better podcaster and better teacher, I have these goals in my life. And when I follow a routine and when I have structure, I find that I'm able **to make big gains** towards achieving these goals. And I'm pretty good with my morning routine, Jeremy, but I'm not very good with my evening and nighttime routine. And I think the reason why is that I have too much variation from night to night to night. So, for example, some nights I have night classes, where I'm actually working at night until around 9 pm. So that really makes it difficult to have structure in the evening, because I do that two nights a week, I work until 9 pm. And one night a week, I work until 7 pm.

Andrew: And, also, my girlfriend regularly has to work at night and I always like to talk with her at the end of the day before I go to sleep. But if she's working until 10 or 11 pm at night, which, to be honest, is not that unusual here in Korea, that means that I have to stay up until she gets home. So if she's working until 11 pm, she might not get home until 11:30 pm. I mean, what I'm trying to say here is that because my day fluctuates from day to day to day, it's hard to have that structure in the evening. So, for example, I can't really set a bedtime goal, like I want to go to sleep every night at 10:30 pm. I would love to have this structure. But it's really hard for me to follow.

Jeremy: Yeah, I think having a child kind of forces you to make that routine.

Andrew: Yeah, maybe. Maybe you don't have the option like I do. Like, you have to do it when you have a kid.

Jeremy: Yes. I don't have that option. We do not have that option.

Andrew: So you said that you read at night before sleeping. And do you read at night just because that's the most comfortable time for you to read? Or do you do it as a way to wind down and actually help your body get ready to sleep?

Jeremy: Actually, both of those reasons are true for me. I like to read at that time because my son is asleep, which means there is silence and I can actually enjoy what I'm reading. But, also, it definitely does help me to wind down and sleep much better. I actually have noticed that the act of moving my eyes back and forth across the page kind of makes me tired. And it helps me to fall asleep much faster.

Andrew: It's almost like you're hypnotizing yourself into sleep.

Jeremy: Yeah, sorta, yeah. Are there any things you do to help yourself fall asleep?

Andrew: Good question. Yes, I suppose there are some things that I do to try and help myself fall asleep. For example, I try to make my room dark. So I will turn off all the lights in my apartment. And I've also noticed that, for whatever reason, in my apartment there are lots of just little lights on appliances, which **drives me bonkers**.

Andrew: So, for example, I have a fan in my room. And that fan has some little LED lights on it. And I have a power bar on my floor where I can plug different electrical things into to extend my outlet. And that also has a bright orange LED light on, on that power bar. And my coffee machine has a little LED light, and my fire alarm has a little LED light. They're just all over the place. And that really disrupts my sleep, having these lights on is really bright. So I've gone around and put electrical tape, which is that black, dark tape, over all of those little LED lights to try and block them out because they're really annoying. And I try to just make my room dark before sleeping to convince my brain to follow its natural circadian rhythm and to get sleepy and go to bed.

Jeremy: Do you use blackout curtains?

Andrew: I do not have blackout curtains, no. I do have some thick curtains, but they're not perfect. Now, in the past, I have used a sleep mask that I would put over my eyes to really try and make it as dark as possible for me when sleeping. But, to be honest with you, it wasn't really effective, because I would always wake up in the morning and the mask would be on the floor. So at some point during my sleep, I would just take it off, because I guess it wasn't comfortable. So I've stopped using that. But, yeah, I've blocked out the LED lights, I close my curtains, and I've also changed my computer screen and phone screen settings so that the blue light is reduced at nighttime. I've heard some scientists say that blue light can keep us up at night. So I thought, wow, I need to get rid of that blue light, so I've done that.

Jeremy: Yeah, I can definitely say that that is true for me. Blue light, especially is detrimental to my quality of sleep.

Andrew: So last question here, Jeremy.

Jeremy: Sure.

Andrew: And then we'll wrap things up. To end of the night, you're in bed, you're reading, and does sleep come quickly for you in the evening and—I guess this is a two-part question. Does sleep come easily? And do you usually go to bed at the same time every night or does it vary a little bit?

Jeremy: Well, these days, since now my son has a regular sleeping pattern, I also have a regular sleeping pattern. But when he was a little baby, that was not the case. I'm sure anyone who has a child knows that. But babies sometimes do not sleep very regularly. So he would wake up in the middle of the night and so my wife and I would also wake up. And I had very irregular sleep for a couple years. But now that is not the case. So, thankfully, I am able to fall asleep around the same time every night, usually between 10:00 and 11:00. And to your other question, when I was younger, I had a lot of trouble falling asleep at night. But now that I'm older, I think I'm able to fall asleep much more quickly. What about you, Andrew?

Andrew: Yeah, so like I mentioned, I would love to fall asleep at the same time every night. I would love to have a schedule, like fall asleep every night at 10:30, wake up every day at 6:30. Something like that would be awesome. But, at this point in my life, I can't do it. I've failed every attempt I've had to do this. So instead, I have a kind of window. I usually try to be in bed before midnight. I think if I'm up after midnight, it's usually not that good and I'm tired the next day. So every day I try to be in bed by midnight.

Andrew: And it depends, I can't say that I fall asleep really easily. If I've had a long, heavy day of work, and especially if I've done some exercise, then usually I fall asleep quite easily. But if I'm busy or stressed out or just have a lot on my mind, then sometimes it's harder to fall asleep. And I kind of **toss and turn** for a while before I finally do doze off. So that is one of the reasons why I really enjoy running, running hard and running fast during the day, because it almost always guarantees that I will fall asleep easily at night.

Jeremy: That is true for me, too. I have noticed. And for my son, actually. When he runs around a lot during the day, he falls asleep much more quickly and much more deeply at night.

Andrew: I mean, it makes sense, right? I think that is perfectly logical. Yeah.

Andrew: So we'll wrap things up here, everyone. Thanks for listening to us and thanks for studying English with us today. I know sometimes it can be hard to get your English study time in, but you can feel good about today, because you got your English study time and practice time in. So that is awesome.

Andrew: If you enjoy Culips and if you learn a lot with us, then please support us. You can do that by signing up to become a Culips member. And for all the details, just visit Culips.com, our website. But that's not the only way that you can support us. It would be really helpful for us, and we'd really appreciate it, if you could tell your friends who are learning English about Culips. Or you could follow us on social media or leave us a nice review and a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. That would go a very long way, as well. If you have any questions or comments for us, feel free to reach out and send us a message. Our email address is contact@Culips.com.

Andrew: We'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Jeremy: Bye, everyone.

Detailed Explanations

Outsider's perspective

Noun

An **outsider's perspective** is the unbiased thoughts, feedback, and opinions from someone who is not part of a particular group. The outsider has no personal experiences in the observed situation.

An insider is someone who belongs to a group (ethnic, sexual identity, age, gender). The insider understands the group's rules, expectations, and language. Outsiders are the opposite. They don't belong to the group and don't understand the rules, expectations, and language. So, the **outsider's perspective** is their observation as a neutral third party.

You can use this noun in two ways. First, you can use it to introduce your thoughts on a subject as an outsider. In this episode, Andrew says, "I'm saying this from an **outsider perspective**, because I don't have children." He's observing based on little to no personal experience. The second way you can use **outsider's perspective** is to request unbiased feedback. For example: "I want an **outsider's perspective** on this before we submit it."

Here are a couple more examples with **outsider's perspective**:

Kiara: So when we've polished the presentation, what do you think about doing a practice run with a few friends watching?

Quinten: I'm in favour of doing the practice run, but why with friends?

Kiara: I think it would be good to get an **outsider's perspective** on our presentation.

Quinten: Ah, you think they might see something we missed?

Kiara: Yeah.

Quinten: OK, let's do it.

Young-Ho: I know I'm not on the team but, from my **outsider's perspective**, you girls might want to do some team bonding exercises. You weren't really working together out on the court today.

Rowan: Yeah, that's what the coach said, too. We're talking about going on a retreat or something over the break.

I would say Expression

I would say is used to give your opinion about something when you're uncertain it's true or when other people might not agree. **I would say** introduces a personal opinion or a judgment made from your knowledge or experience. In this episode, Jeremy says, "**I would say** that we do a little bit less routine than other people we know." His opinion is that his family has less routine than what he has seen of his friends' routines. By using **I would say**, he's showing that he might be wrong, though he doesn't believe he is.

You can also say: **in my opinion**, **I would think**, and **I would imagine**, and you can also use the contraction "I'd" instead of "I would."

Here are a couple more examples with **I would say**:

Mei: Did you have a chance to read my script? I need to hand it in to the professor next week and want to work on it this weekend.

Lucas: Oh, I did! Sorry I didn't email you yet. Quick notes are that it's well-organized, with some clever dialogue and interesting metaphors. **I would say** it's a good beginning.

Mei: Still needs a lot of work, though?

Lucas: A bit. I'll email you all my notes when I get home.

Mei: Awesome, thanks so much!

Yori: Now that I've bought myself this fancy new computer, I guess I'll sell my old laptop. How much do you think I can get for it?

Vanessa: When did you buy it?

Yori: About 4 years ago?

Vanessa: Oh, not much then. **I would say** about \$100 if you're lucky, but you might not even have anyone interested. Technology changes so fast these days.

Yori: Really? But I paid over \$500 for it! I'm gonna see if I can sell it for \$250.

Vanessa: Good luck with that.

Set/rough routine

Noun

A **routine** is a list of actions that are followed, like a fixed program. When you follow a **set routine**, your routine is always the same. You do the same thing at the same time each day, week, month, or year. When you follow a **rough routine**, you have an outline of what you need to do each day, week, month, or year. You don't have to do these things in a specific order or at a specific time.

For example, a child's **set nighttime routine** might be: 7 pm, change into pyjamas; 7:15 pm, brush teeth; 7:30 pm, read bedtime story; and 8 pm, sleep. In this **set routine**, all tasks must be completed in the order given, every day starting at the same time.

A child's **rough nighttime routine** might be: 8 pm is bedtime, so before then, we have to brush teeth, change into pyjamas, and read a story. In a **rough routine**, you can do the tasks in any order. Also, if there isn't enough time, some tasks might not get done. For example, if the family didn't start getting ready for bed until 7:45 pm, there might not be enough time for a story, so there's no story time.

Here are a couple more examples with **set/rough routine**:

Jamal: Ah, man, I totally forgot to do my leg exercises today!

Abdullah: Wait, you did your workout but you didn't do all your exercises?

Jamal: Yeah.

Abdullah: Don't you have a **set routine** for your workouts? If not, you should. I've been using the same one for years and it's great. I never miss leg day.

Suzume: This homeschooling stuff has been a nightmare. I can't keep my kids from getting bored 5 minutes into a subject!

Aysha: Have you tried setting up a routine for them? I've got a **rough routine** with my daughter and it helps her focus because she knows what to expect later in the day. Granted, we don't always follow it.

Suzume: We haven't tried a routine yet. I usually just grab whatever subject we haven't worked on yet and plunk that down. I'll see if I can come up with some sort of schedule. Even if it doesn't help, it certainly won't hurt!

To make gains

Slang

To make gains means to make progress, improve, or move forward in something. It is most commonly used to refer to building muscle through working out and weightlifting. You can also use it to refer to anything that brings great pleasure, be it things or people.

In this episode, Andrew mentions that following a routine has allowed him “**to make big gains** towards achieving these goals.” For him, **making gains** is completing the steps needed to achieve his goals.

Here are a couple more examples with **to make gains**:

Caroline: Hey, Shion! How’s that vegetable garden of yours coming along?

Shion: Oh, I **made some small gains**. The beans grew nicely, some are even close to ready for harvest, but the tomatoes decided they didn’t like being where I put them. I lost the whole plant.

Caroline: I’m sorry to hear that! My tomatoes are thriving, so let me know if you need some—as long as I can get some of your beans in exchange.

Shion: Deal! Come by in a week or two and we’ll do an exchange.

Dewey: Dude, I’ve been **making all kinds of gains** this year!

Austin: No way, man. I’m so jealous. I’ve been hitting the gym as often as I can, but not seeing any results.

Dewey: That sucks. Maybe you’re just not doing the right things. You want to try my workout?

Austin: I totally do. Let’s go to the gym and **make some gains**, man.

Drive [one] bonkers

Idiom

Drive [one] bonkers means to make someone feel very annoyed or frustrated to the point of distraction. It is a hyperbolic expression used to show the person's extreme frustration or annoyance, supposedly to the point of insanity. That's why you can replace bonkers in the idiom with any synonym for crazy: mad, nuts, bananas, insane, etc.

Here are a few more examples with **drives me bonkers**:

Takeshi: You are off next week, aren't you? Do you have a big vacation planned?

Steve: Sort of. We're going down to my wife's parents' cottage for a family get-together.

Takeshi: For the whole week?

Steve: Yeah.

Takeshi: Gross. A week on vacation with relatives is enough **to drive me bonkers**.

Steve: Me too. I'm glad to get the time off work, but it won't be relaxing.

Mollie: Honey, I need you to check the car. That loud beeping noise is **driving me bonkers**!

Oliver: Yes, dear. I'll look at it tomorrow.

Julie: Oh, hey, did you ever get that situation sorted out with your kids' teachers?

Kumiko: No, not really.

Julie: Oh dear. What about the other children's' parents? Are they having the same problems?

Kumiko: Yes. We've been meeting every week to discuss the issue together. But there's nothing we can do right now. And I seriously need it sorted out. The whole problem has **driven me nearly bonkers**!

To toss and turn

Verb

To toss and turn means to sleep restlessly or not at all. This verb is most often used when describing how you sleep, or don't sleep, at night. People who **toss and turn** lie in bed awake and might be agitated or stressed by something. When you **toss and turn**, you're continuously moving about while in bed and, as a result, don't get a good night's sleep.

Here are a few more examples with **to toss and turn**:

Rosa: You look exhausted.

Constance: I feel exhausted.

Rosa: Not sleeping well?

Constance: No. Every night, it seems like I have **to toss and turn** for hours before I can get comfortable. Meanwhile, there's my husband snoring away, after falling asleep as soon as his head hits the pillow.

Rosa: Oh my. Here, have some coffee.

Constance: Thanks. But what I really need is a good night's sleep.

Angela: What's wrong?

Sam: What? Nothing. Why would you ask that?

Angela: You've been **tossing and turning** for the past 30 minutes.

Sam: Sorry, babe. Just thinking. I'll go lie down on the couch so you can sleep.

Angela: OK. Thanks, honey. Hope you can get some sleep, too.

Hideki: Man, this test has me so stressed out.

Lucas: Same here. I **tossed and turned** all night. Didn't get a wink of sleep.

Hideki: Me too. I'm so tired, I might fall asleep during class.

Quiz

- 1. Every day, Martha's family follows a detailed morning schedule; this is an example of what?**
 - a) rough routine
 - b) set routine
 - c) good management
 - d) motherly love

- 2. Which of the following is an example of an outsider's perspective?**
 - a) a chef providing feedback on a drawing
 - b) a chef providing feedback on a recipe
 - c) an artist providing feedback on a drawing
 - d) an artist providing feedback on a painting

- 3. If someone is annoying you to the point of distraction, they are:**
 - a) driving you home
 - b) driving you to town
 - c) driving you bonkers
 - d) driving you away

- 4. Jerome tossed and turned all night. How did he sleep?**
 - a) very well; he got a lot of sleep
 - b) soundly; he got enough sleep
 - c) dreamlessly; he got some sleep
 - d) not well; he got very little sleep

- 5. You're about to voice your opinion, but you're not 100% sure you're correct. What might you say to show this?**
 - a) if I may
 - b) I would say
 - c) pardon me
 - d) it's proven that

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is your nighttime routine? Is it a set routine or a rough routine?
2. Does having (or not having) a nighttime routine help you make gains towards a goal? How?
3. Describe something that drives you bonkers.
4. Do you ever toss and turn at night? If yes, why? If no, why not?
5. Describe a time you needed an outsider's perspective on something.

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.a 3.c 4.d 5.b

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