

# SLUMBER SANCTUARY

WHEN COUNTING SHEEP ISN'T WORKING, HERE'S HOW TO CREATE A PEACEFUL AMBIANCE TO LURE IN THE Z'S.

BY DORKYS RAMOS



■ **GETTING GOOD SLEEP IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT SOUNDS LIKE A BRAINLESS FEAT** but then leaves us scratching our heads when we wake up totally exhausted in the morning. How can something so natural be so hard?

According to a recent report on the prevalence of sleep disturbances across various racial groups in the U.S., Latinos are nearly twice as likely to get short sleep than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. So if you've ever found yourself staring at the ceiling in the dark, just begging, *rogandole a los santos*—for sweet slumber to envelop you—here's how to set up your bedroom for optimal rest success.

**KEEP YOUR ROOM DARK** to let your body's circadian rhythm guide it into and out of sleep. If too much external light is seeping in through your windows, block it out with shades and thicker curtains. While up and about at night, use low-wattage bulbs or night-lights to keep bright beams from yanking your brain back to high alert.

**GIVE YOURSELF SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO EACH NIGHT.** Just like mami used to do, switch out your bed sheets for a fresh and clean set regularly and leave a small sachet of lavender under your pillow. Studies suggest that the scent encourages your mind and body to relax.

**SURE, YOU NEED TO CATCH UP ON YOUR LATE-NIGHT TELENOVELAS**, but keep your bedroom drama-free. The light from cell phones and other devices can disrupt your body's clock, so avoid bringing work into bed or watching TV in the bedroom. It should remain a calm sanctuary for reading, sleeping, or sex—so when you're there, your mind eases toward what's about to take place.

**WHETHER YOU'RE SHIVERING THROUGH THE NIGHT OR SWEATING THROUGH YOUR SHEETS**, temperature plays a major role in how well we sleep. While cooler is better—the National Sleep Foundation recommends keeping the thermostat at 65 degrees during the night—it truly comes down to personal preference. Wear cozy clothes and pile on the throws to beat the chill or use a lighter blanket and fitted sheets made from a cooler material, like linen, to better regulate your body's temperature.

**THERE'S NO POINT IN DRESSING IN YOUR COMFIEST PIJAMAS** only to toss and turn on a mattress that's too soft or too hard. If your mattress is all wrong, kick it to the curb. Find one that feels best for the position you tend to sleep in. Soon they'll be calling you *dormilona*—sleepyhead!