

The No-Meeting Bedtime Block

One calendar block that actually protects bedtime

You'd never let a client book a call during your one non-negotiable meeting of the week. But bedtime, the one recurring appointment that matters most at home, sits completely unprotected on most calendars, which is exactly why it keeps getting eaten by a "quick call" that runs long. Companies protect focus time with hard calendar blocks because open time gets claimed by whoever asks loudest. Bedtime needs the same defense, and it takes fifteen minutes to set up.

What you need: access to your work calendar and, ideally, five minutes to tell your team it exists.

The steps

1. **Pick your real bedtime window.** (2 minutes) Not the ideal one, the actual one. If dinner-to-lights-out runs 5:30 to 7:30, block that, not a tidier version you wish were true.
2. **Create a recurring calendar block.** (3 minutes) Label it plainly: "Offline, family." You don't owe anyone a euphemism.
3. **Set it to decline conflicting invites automatically, if your calendar allows it.** (3 minutes) Removes the moment of guilt-negotiating with yourself when a meeting request lands on top of it.
4. **Tell your manager and closest collaborators once.** (5 minutes) One message: "I'm offline 5:30 to 7:30 most weekdays, back online after. Flag anything truly urgent separately." Said once, respected mostly forever.
5. **Protect it from yourself, not just others.** (2 minutes) Put your phone in another room during the block. You are your own most frequent meeting-crasher.

Your block

My bedtime window

What I'll label the block

Who I need to tell

Where my phone goes during the block

When it goes sideways

Someone books over it anyway. Move the meeting, don't cave and take the call. The first time you defend it costs social capital; every time after that, it's just known as your schedule.

A genuine emergency needs you during the block. Fine, emergencies are emergencies. The block isn't meant to survive a real fire, it's meant to survive "got 10 minutes to sync."

You protect the block but spend it distracted, thinking about work. That's a shutdown ritual problem, not a calendar problem. Pair this block with a real transition before it starts, or the calendar win won't translate into actual presence.

A calendar block is just a boundary with a time stamp. You already know how to defend those at work. Defend this one too.

