

SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS

Sleep only as much as you need to feel refreshed for the next day.

Restricting your time in bed helps consolidate and deepen your sleep. Excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep. Get up at your regular time the next day, not matter how little slept the night before.

Get up at the same time of day, NO MATTER WHAT, 7 days a week.

A regular wake up time in the morning leads to regular time for sleep onset in the evening. Essentially, you are setting your 'biological clock.'

Exercise Regularly.

Exercise will make it easier to initiate sleep and deepen your sleep. BUT, schedule exercise so that it does not interfere with your bed time. A good general rule is to avoid rigorous activity within 3 hours of when you intend to go to bed.

Make sure your bedroom is comfortable and free from light and noise.

A comfortable, noise-free sleep environment will reduce the likelihood that you will wake up during the night. Noise that does not awaken you may also disturb the quality of your sleep. Carpeting, insulated curtains, closing your door, or a white noise machine can help.

Make sure that your bedroom is a comfortable temperature at night.

Excessively warm or cold sleep environments can disturb sleep.

Eat regular meals and do not go to bed hungry.

Hunger may disturb your sleep. A light snack at bedtime (especially carbohydrates) may help you sleep. But, avoid greasy or heavy foods (these can trigger discomfort, indigestion, etc.).

Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.

Reducing liquid intake several hours before bed will minimize the need for nighttime bathroom trips.

Cut down on all caffeine products.

Caffeinated beverages and foods (e.g., coffee, tea, certain sodas, even chocolate) can cause difficulty falling sleep, nighttime waking, and shallow sleep. In some people, even caffeine early in the day can disrupt nighttime sleep.

Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening.

Although alcohol can help reduce tension, it disrupts the sleep cycle and can result in nighttime waking.

Smoking may disturb sleep.

Nicotine is a stimulant. Try not to smoke during the night when you have trouble sleeping.

Don't take your problems to bed.

Plan some time earlier in the evening/day for working on your problems or planning the next day's activities. Worrying may interfere with initiating sleep and produce shallow sleep.

Do NOT try to fall asleep

This only makes the problem worse. Instead, turn the light back on, leave the bedroom, and do a quiet activity (like reading a book). Don't engage in anything stimulating/activating (don't watch an action movie). Return to your bed only when you are feeling sleepy.

Put the alarm clock under the bed or turn it away so you can't see it.

Clock watching may lead to frustration, anger, and worry—all of which interfere with sleep.

Avoid naps.

Staying awake during the day helps you to fall asleep at night.