

Sleep Hygiene Tips



Keep a regular sleep schedule

Go to bed at the same time. Wake up at the same time. Ideally, your schedule will remain the same (+/- 30 minutes) every night of the week.

Avoid naps if possible

Each of us needs a certain amount of sleep within a 24-hour period. We need that amount and no more. Taking naps decreases the amount of sleep that we need the next night – which may lead to [insomnia](#).

Don't stay in bed awake for more than 5-10 minutes

If you find your mind racing or you worry about not being able to sleep in the middle of the night, get out of bed. Sit on the couch or in a comfortable chair, make sure the lights are dim, and avoid TV, internet, or screen time since they will keep you awake. Lying in bed and struggling to sleep can actually make it harder to get back to sleep. If you are a 'clock watcher' at night, hide the clock.

Don't watch TV, use your phone, or read in bed

When you watch TV, use the phone, or read in bed, you associate the bed with being awake. The bed is reserved for two things: sleep and adult activities.

Avoid stimulants close to bedtime

Caffeine can make it harder to get to sleep and make sleep less restful. Avoid caffeine (found in coffee, tea, chocolate, and soda) for 4-6 hours before bedtime. Nicotine is also a stimulant so avoid all tobacco products close to bedtime.

Avoid alcohol use close to bedtime

Alcohol affects sleep quality, leaving you less rested in the morning. Marijuana also leads to poor sleep.

Exercise regularly

As little as 10 minutes of exercise each day can make it easier to get to sleep and improves the quality of sleep. Make sure to avoid exercise within 2 hours of bedtime.

Have a quiet, comfortable bedroom

Set your bedroom thermostat at a comfortable temperature. Turn off the lights, the TV, and anything that makes noise. If you need the TV to get to sleep, use a timer set for 30 minutes so it

turns off after you are asleep. Background 'white noise' like a fan is OK. Your bedroom should be dark. Have a comfortable mattress, pillow, and bedding.

Have a comfortable pre-bedtime routine

Dim the lights about an hour before bed – darkness signals the brain to switch to sleep mode. Stop watching TV, playing video games, or using screens. Change into pajamas, have a cup of herbal tea, read, take a warm bath or shower, anything that helps you relax and settle down at the end of the day.

Do a little math

If your brain just won't slow down, try subtraction. Starting at 300, subtract 3, then repeat until you are feeling sleepy. This takes just enough concentration to make it hard to think about other things.

Write it down

Anxiety can keep you awake at night, so try writing down your worries in a journal before bed. This may help clear your head of nagging thoughts that make it hard to get to sleep.

Meditation, or quiet time

Try activities that calm and soothe before going to bed. Meditation, mindfulness exercises, breathing techniques, progressive relaxation and yoga can all help you settle before bed.