

7 tips to better sleep

Feeling crabby, worn out, always tired? Do you toss and turn every night? Not getting a good night's sleep?

There are many factors that can interfere with a good night's sleep: health, family and financial issues, as well as unexpected challenges. All of these and many other situations can make quality sleep elusive. We may not be able to control these factors but you can adapt habits that encourage better sleep.

Stick to a sleep schedule

Go to bed and get up at the same time every night, including weekends. Being consistent reinforces your body's sleep-wake cycle helps promote better sleep at night.

If you find that you cannot that you cannot fall asleep within 15 minutes of going to bed, get up and something relaxing. Go back to bed when you're tired. If you agonize over falling asleep, you may find it even more difficult to nod off.

Pay attention to what you eat and drink

Don't go to bed either feeling hungry or full. Your discomfort may keep you awake. Also limit the amount you drink before going to bed. This will prevent disruptive, middle of the night trips to the bathroom.

Use nicotine, caffeine and alcohol with caution. The stimulating effects of nicotine and caffeine may take hours to wear off and interfere with quality sleep. Even though alcohol can make you feel sleepy at first, it can disrupt sleep later into the night.

Create a bedtime ritual

Do the same things each night. This will "tell" your body it's time to wind down. Taking a bath, listening to soothing music, reading a book are all relaxing activities that can promote better sleep and hopefully ease the transition from wake to drowsy and then sleep.

Be wary of watching TV or using other electronic devices as part of the bedtime ritual. Some research suggests that screen time or other media before bed may also interfere with sleep.

Get comfortable

Create a room that is ideal for sleeping: cool, dark and quiet. Room darkening shades, earplugs a fan or other devices that may be suitable for relaxation.

A comfortable mattress and pillow contributes to better sleep. Comfort level is subjective. Choose bedding that is suitable to your specific needs. If you share a bed, make sure there is adequate room for the two of

you. If you have children or pets, set limits on how often they sleep with you, or insist on separate sleeping quarters.

Limit daytime naps

Long naps during the day can interfere with sleep during the night, especially if you are struggling with insomnia or poor sleeping quality. Limit daytime naps to 30 minutes ideally, during the mid afternoon.

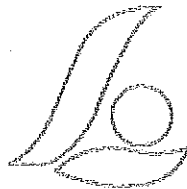
If you are a "shift worker", you will need to cover windows to prevent light and sunshine, both which adjust your internal clock, from interrupting your daytime sleep.

Include physical activity in your daily routine

Regular physical activity can promote better sleep, help you fall asleep faster and allow you to sleep deeper. However, timing is everything. Exercise too close to bedtime may energize you so much that falling asleep may become problematic. If this seems to be the case, exercise earlier in the day.

Manage Stress

Too much to do, too much to think about? Consider healthy ways to relieve stress.



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