

SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS AND TRICKS

What is sleep hygiene? Sleep hygiene is a variety of different practices that are necessary to have normal, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness.

Strategies to assist in getting a good night sleep:

Sleep Schedule: Getting less than 7-8 hours of sleep can lead to physical and cognitive problems. Prioritize nighttime sleep over napping, as naps may interfere with nighttime rest. Short midday naps, taken before 3 pm and lasting no more than an hour, are the least disruptive and can be beneficial after sleep deprivation.

Create a Comfortable Sleep Environment: For quality sleep, establish a cozy sleep setting with a supportive mattress and fresh bedding. Maintain a moderate room temperature, reduce noise, and block light.

Sleep Only When Sleepy: Don't force yourself into bed at a particular time if you're not feeling sleepy. Otherwise, we often lie awake in bed, frustrated that we can't sleep.

Just for Sleeping: Reserve your bed solely for sleeping. Avoid activities like reading, watching TV, working, or studying in bed, as they keep your mind active and hinder sleep. Train your brain to associate bed with sleep, not activity.

Don't Worry: Keep concerns regarding work, school, health, and relationships out of the bedroom. Schedule a designated "worry time" earlier in the evening to address them. Engage in "planning time" to write solutions and plan for the next day. If you wake up worried during the night, jot down concerns and reassure yourself you'll tackle them in the morning. Keep lighting low while noting worries at night.

Set a Bedtime Routine: A bedtime routine cues your body for sleep. Establish a consistent routine like taking a hot bath, putting on pajamas, listening to soft music, and reading until sleepy before going to bed.

Relax: Engage in relaxation activities before bedtime. Take a hot bath 90 minutes prior, practice relaxation exercises, meditation, or listen to calming music. Just before bed, do 3 minutes of deep breathing and gentle stretching.

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Avoid Technology: Silence electronic devices like smartphones, computers, or tablets at least 2 hours before bedtime. Excessive screen time disrupts sleep, causing daytime fatigue.

Get Out of Bed: If unable to sleep after 20-30 minutes, engage in relaxing activities like meditation or listening to calm music. When drowsy, return to bed. Stretching and deep breathing aid relaxation and promote rest.

Alarm Clock: Face your alarm clock or cell phone away to reduce nighttime checking.

Fixed Wake-up Time: Wake up at the same time daily, even on weekends, to establish a consistent sleep rhythm.

Natural Light: Spend time outdoors or in natural light daily to regulate your body's sleep-wake cycle.

Exercise: Engage in 30 minutes of exercise at least three times a week, avoiding vigorous activity before bedtime.

Light Snacks: Enjoy light, healthy snacks like cheese, crackers, turkey, bananas, or warm milk in the evening to improve sleep.

Avoid Stimulants: Refrain from consuming caffeine or alcohol at least four hours before bedtime.

Fluid Intake: Limit evening fluid intake to minimize nighttime bathroom visits.

Avoid Smoking: Avoid smoking at least four hours before bed, as it can disrupt sleep.

Medications: Consult a pharmacist to review medications that may affect sleep and adjust timing or find alternatives.

Patience: Improvement in sleep may take time; consistency is key.

Consistency: Stick to a chosen strategy consistently for better results.

