

HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS



Research shows that creating healthy sleep habits is a central part of health and wellness, and practicing good sleep hygiene aims to set you up for a good night's rest. National Sleep Foundation guidelines advise that healthy adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night. Keeping a consistent sleep schedule, having a comfortable bedroom that is free of disruptions, following a bedtime routine, and having healthy habits during the daytime can all contribute to good sleep hygiene.

SETTING YOUR SLEEP SCHEDULE

Having a set schedule as part of your day gets your brain and body in the routine of sleeping for the amount of time that your body needs.



Pro Tips:

- **Have a Set Wake-Up Time:** Regardless of whether it's a weekday or weekend, try to wake up at the same time.
- **Make Sleep a Priority:** It might be tempting to skip sleep to work, study, socialize, or exercise, but it's vital to treat sleep as a priority.
- **Adjust Sleep Schedule Gradually:** If you want to shift your sleep times, make small, step-by-step adjustments of up to an hour or two at a time.
- **Be Mindful of Naps:** Try to keep naps relatively short and limited to the early afternoon if needed.

6 Strategies for Optimizing Your Bedroom

To fall asleep more easily, you want your bedroom to be calm and free of disruptions.

1. Have a comfortable mattress and pillow for maximum comfort.
2. Use bedding (sheets, blankets and pillow cases) that match your needs and preferences.
3. Set a cool yet comfortable temperature.
4. Block out light by using heavy curtains or an eye mask.
5. Drown out noise by using a white noise machine, ear plugs or a fan.
6. Try calming scents such as lavender to to promote relaxation.

MAINTAINING HEALTHY DAILY HABITS



Incorporating healthy routines during the day can support your circadian rhythm and limit sleep disruptions.



Pro Tips:

- **Get Daylight Exposure:** Light, especially sunlight, is one of the key drivers of circadian rhythms that can encourage quality sleep.
- **Be Physically Active:** Regular exercise can make it easier to sleep at night and also delivers a host of other health benefits.
- **Don't Smoke:** Nicotine stimulates the body in ways that disrupt sleep.
- **Reduce Alcohol Consumption:** Alcohol may make it easier to fall asleep, but the effect wears off, disrupting sleep later in the night.
- **Cut Down on Caffeine in the Afternoon and Evening:** Because it's a stimulant, caffeine can keep you wired even when you want to sleep.
- **Don't Dine Late:** You need to give your body time to digest (2-3 hours) but if you must eat before bed, the meal or snack should be on the lighter side.
- **Restrict In-Bed Activity:** It is best to only use your bed only for sleep (with sex being the one exception).

FOLLOWING A BEDTIME ROUTINE

How you prepare for bed can determine how easily you'll be able to fall asleep.



Pro Tips:

- **Be Consistent With Your Routine:** Following the same steps each night, including things like putting on your pajamas and brushing your teeth, can reinforce in your mind that it is bedtime.
- **Set Aside 30 Minutes For Winding Down:** Take advantage of whatever puts you in a state of calm such as soft music, light stretching, reading, and/or relaxation exercises.
- **Dim the Lights:** Try to keep away from bright lights because they can hinder the production of melatonin, a hormone that the body creates to facilitate sleep.
- **Unplug From Electronics:** Cell phones, tablets, tvs and laptops cause mental stimulation that is hard to shut off and may decrease melatonin production. Many phones and other devices allow you to set a bedtime routine where do not disturb is automatically turned on based on your settings.
- **Utilize Methods of Relaxation:** Meditation, mindfulness, paced breathing, journaling and other relaxation techniques can put you in the right mindset for bed.