

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

To help get the most out of your sleep time, try some of the following suggestions:

1. The bed and sleeping environment should be *comfortable* and conducive to sleep. Excessively warm bedrooms can disrupt sleep and there is no indication that excessively cold rooms solidify sleep. In addition, if possible, insulate your room against sound and light.
2. Allow time before going to bed to *unwind*. The time for going over the problems of the day or plans for tomorrow is not while you are lying in bed. If worries, thoughts, or ideas keep popping into your head while lying in bed, try taking 10 to 15 minutes before bed to jot them down, make preliminary plans (the best way to tackle issues is one step at a time) then "put *them* to bed!"
3. Keep *regular* sleep and wake *hours*. Make an effort to go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends. It is especially important to keep your bedtimes within one hour of each other.
4. *Avoid* the use of *stimulants* and medications that can disturb sleep such as nicotine, caffeine and diet aids, especially in the evening.
5. *Regular exercise* can help sleep but strenuous exercise close to bedtime can be too arousing, interfering with sleep. Avoid exercising within 2 to 3 hours of bedtime.
6. A *light snack* near bedtime may help keep hunger from disturbing your sleep, but large amounts of food or liquids just prior to bedtime may create disturbances due to gastrointestinal activity, discomfort, or the urge to urinate. (As a rule, carbohydrates tend to promote sleep, whereas proteins may disturb sleep.)
7. Although *alcohol* can help induce sleep, the sleep is often fragmented and of poor quality.
8. While some people have become conditioned to falling asleep with the *television* or *radio* on, in general, it is best to use the bedroom *only for sleeping*. Additionally, there should be no reminders of work or other stresses in the bedroom such as a desk where bills are stacked.
9. If you become preoccupied with *checking the clock* at night, cover it up or turn it around so that you cannot see it.
10. *Trouble falling asleep* can lead to frustration which can, in turn, lead to more difficulty sleeping. If you are unable to sleep, *get up* after about 20 to 30 minutes and go into another room. Engage in some non-stimulating but rewarding activity. *Return to bed* after another 20 minutes or so, repeating the process until you fall asleep. Better yet, when unable to sleep, try a relaxation exercise - these are extremely helpful in helping people to fall asleep.
11. *Do not sleep more than you need* to feel healthy and refreshed the next day. Limiting the time in bed can solidify sleep whereas extending the time in bed can result in shallow and fragmented sleep. DO NOT sleep in or take extra naps in order to catch up on sleep. This only provides a temporary fix & throws the sleep-wake cycle out of synchronization, causing more difficulty sleeping.
12. The occasional use of *sleeping pills* may improve sleep. People with chronic insomnia might need to be involved in a physician-directed program to improve their sleep long term.



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