

Sleep Tips For Successful Sleep

also known as Sleep Hygiene

1. **Establish a regular routine** that includes going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Maintaining a consistent **sleep-wake cycle** is the key to better health overall.
2. **Get an adequate amount of sleep** every night. Determine the amount of **sleep** you need by keeping track of how long you sleep without using an alarm clock for a week. Maintain this "personal" sleep requirement.
3. **Go to bed when you are sleepy.** If you have difficulty falling asleep or wake up shortly after going to sleep, leave the bedroom and read quietly or do some other relaxing activity. Avoid overly bright lights as this can cue your wake cycle.
4. **Develop sleep rituals** before going to bed. Do the same things in the same order before going to bed to cue your body to slow down and relax.
5. **Avoid stress and worries at bedtime.** Address tomorrow's activities, concerns, or distractions earlier in the day. Certain activities, such as listening to soft music, reading, or taking a warm bath, can help you wind down.
6. **Use your bed for sleeping and sex only.** Often, doing other activities in bed like watching TV, paying bills, or working only serve to initiate worries and concerns. Let your mind associate the bed with sleeping, relaxing, and pleasure.
7. **Avoid heavy meals late in the evening;** similarly, avoid going to bed hungry. A light snack, especially dairy foods, can help you sleep.
8. **Reduce your intake of caffeine and nicotine** 4-6 hours before going to sleep. **Stimulants** interfere with your ability to fall asleep and progress into deep sleep.
9. **Avoid alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime.** As a depressant that slows brain activity, alcohol may initially make you tired, but you will end up having fragmented sleep. In addition, being tired intensifies the effects of alcohol. Alcohol also aggravates **snoring** and **sleep apnea**.
10. **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise, even for 20 minutes, 3 times a week, promotes deep sleep.
11. **Don't nap for more than 30 minutes** or after 3 p.m. Avoiding naps all together will ensure that you are tired at night. Longer naps disrupt the body's ability to stay asleep.
12. **Maintain a dark, quiet, and cool room** to sleep in.
13. **Use sleeping aids conservatively,** and avoid using them for more than one or two nights per month. Avoid sleeping pills altogether if you have **obstructive sleep apnea**; it can be a deadly combination