

SLEEP HYGIENE



WHAT IS SLEEP HYGIENE

'Sleep hygiene' is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing a set of guidelines and tips which are designed to enhance good sleeping, and there is much evidence to suggest that these strategies can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

GET REGULAR SLEEP

One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up around the same time every day, EVEN on weekends and days off! This regular rhythm will make you feel better regulate your sleep cycle.

SLEEP WHEN SLEEPY

Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in bed.

GET UP & TRY AGAIN

If you haven't been able to fall asleep after 20 minutes or more, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy - then return to bed and try again. Try sitting on the couch with the lights off, or read something that isn't too interesting or stimulating - like the phone book.

AVOID CAFFEINE & NICOTINE

Avoid any caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, and some medications) or nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, vape, or e-cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These stimulants can make falling and staying asleep hard.

NO NAPS

Avoid taking naps during the day to make sure you are tired at bedtime. If you can't make it through the day, nap for less than an hour and do it before 3pm.

EAT RIGHT

A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well. Timing is important. Some feel like an empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack - but not a heavy meal as that can interrupt sleep.

AVOID ALCOHOL

Avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe it is relaxing and helps them fall asleep, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.

YOUR BED IS FOR SLEEPING

Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex - this is so your body associates bed with sleep. If you use your bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, etc., your body will not learn this connection.

SLEEP RITUALS

You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it's time to sleep. Some people do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea.

BATH-TIME

Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful as it raises your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again.

NO CLOCK-WATCHING

Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock during the night. Frequently checking the clock (especially if you turn the light on to read the time) only reinforces negative thoughts like "look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep" or "it's so early, I only slept 5 hours."

EXERCISE

Regular exercise is helpful towards a good night's sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise within 4 hours of bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to feel refreshed.

THE RIGHT SPACE

It is very important your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. Keep your room cool with plenty of blankets to stay warm. Have curtains or an eye mask to block out morning light and earplugs if it's noisy outside.

KEEP DAYTIME ROUTINE THE SAME

Even if you had a bad night's sleep and are tired, try to keep your daytime activities the same as you planned.