How to Get Better Sleep

It’s difficult to do anything when you are physically, emotionally or mentally tired. Everything you do, even very simple and basic things, is much more of a struggle and requires much more effort than usual. One way to overcome this issue is to get better sleep. Sleep is important because it gives the body and mind an opportunity to repair and rejuvenate itself, and it provides some time away from stress and stressful activity.

1. Although it can be difficult, especially during stressful or busy periods in your life, it is important to set a particular time to go to bed and it is important that you adhere consistently to the time that you set. Also, set a particular time to wake up and adhere consistently to that time as well. This strategy sets your internal clock and lets your body know when it’s time to start winding down and go to sleep, and it lets your body know when it’s time to get up and get going.
2. Although people often try to “catch up on sleep” by going to bed early sometimes, it doesn’t really help them to regain “lost sleep,” but it can throw off your internal sleep clock. It can lead to you waking up too early or waking up periodically during your sleep cycle because your sleep clock has been disrupted.
3. The conventional wisdom says that everyone is supposed to get eight hours of sleep every night. This is not necessarily true. It’s important that you determine what is an adequate amount of sleep for you. Determine how many hours of sleep is enough for you in order for you not to feel sleepy or tired during the day and how many hours you sleep naturally so that you wake up without an alarm clock. Whatever that number of hours is, that is the amount of sleep for you to shoot for.
4. Don’t use the bedroom for anything other than sleep and sex. Although this sounds simple, many people take their work or their study material to bed with them. This is like bringing stress into an environment that should only be used for peace, sleep, relaxation and intimacy. Not bringing stress into the bedroom also means that arguments, conflict or difficult situations should also stay out of the bedroom. If you are in conflict with your partner and have to talk about the problem, talk about it in the living room or any place other than the bedroom. If you don’t, you will start to associate stress, conflict and tension with the bedroom, and this association will contribute to your difficulty sleeping.
5. Don’t drink anything with caffeine several hours before going to bed. Preferably, don’t have anything with caffeine after you eat dinner. The stimulant effect of the caffeine can interfere with your relaxation and ability to drift off to sleep.
6. To set a distinction between your “active” time and your “restful” time of day, set certain rituals or behaviors that will signal that the busy part of the day is over and the restful part of the evening is about to begin. These routines can include having a cup of (caffeine-free) tea, starting the dishwasher after dinner, taking a hot shower or reading a relaxing book. The idea is that, when you engage in the “restful” routine, it signals to your body and mind that it’s time to settle down and get some rest.
7. Avoid doing anything that is physically, emotionally or mentally stimulating before going to bed as engaging in these activities will not be conducive to resting but will keep you stimulated and energized. Avoid vigorous exercise (if it energizes you), heated discussions, doing housework, doing work from your job or watching something on TV that is too stimulating or emotionally charged.
8. Although it can feel helpful to do so, taking naps, especially long ones, can interfere with your ability to go to sleep later on because long or frequent naps can throw off your internal sleep clock.
9. Regular exercise can relieve stress, help you clear your mind and tire you out so that you can get some good sleep later on. Just try not to exercise too close to your bedtime.