

Guide to Sleep Hygiene

Proper sleep habits are essential for any healthy lifestyle. Use the following suggestions if you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.

- Avoid caffeine for at least six hours before going to sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and recreational drugs before going to sleep and throughout the night.
- Avoid bright lights, including television and computer screens, before going to sleep because they are stimulating to your brain and might keep you awake.
- Don't exercise or eat a heavy meal shortly before going to sleep.
- Avoid napping during the day because it will make you less tired at night.
- Make your bedroom as comfortable as possible. Keep the temperature at a cool, comfortable level, keep your room as dark as possible (use a sleep mask if you need one), and minimize as much noise as possible (use earplugs if you need them).
- Only use your bed for sleeping and sexual activity, not for working, reading, or watching television. This way, your body will associate your bed with sleep, not with activity.
- If you have trouble falling asleep or if you wake up in the middle of the night and can't fall back to sleep, get out of bed and do something soothing until you feel tired enough to go back to sleep. Don't lie in bed thinking about other things; this will just make you feel more aggravated and make it harder to get back to sleep.
- Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning. Create a regular pattern of sleeping and waking that your body can predict.
- Use some kind of relaxation method before going to sleep in order to calm your body and mind: take a bath, meditate, pray, write down your thoughts, use relaxation skills, and so on.
- If your sleep problems persist, if you can't stay awake during the day, or if you're feeling depressed, contact a medical professional for advice.