

## **Suggestions for Better Sleep (Sleep Hygiene)**

Below are many things that you can do or consider to help you sleep better. Your health care provider might point out specific actions for you to take that are most important for you after they have done a sleep assessment.

### **Stimulants**

1. Avoid or minimize things that could be too stimulating
2. Avoid alcohol within a few hours of your bedtime
3. Avoid caffeine-containing beverages or foods after 2pm and if you are sensitive to caffeine avoid it after 12 noon
4. Avoid: caffeine containing sodas or waters including Pepsi, Coke and Mountain Dew  
Avoid: tea, coffee, lattes, chocolate, coffee or espresso containing ice creams
5. Avoid Sudafed or other decongestant cold medicines at night
6. Some medications may have stimulating effects. Consult your pharmacist and doctor to determine if any of them might be contributing to sleep problems. Do not discontinue them without permission from your doctor.  
These medications include, but are not limited to:  
Certain asthma inhalers  
Certain cardiac medications such as beta-blockers or antiarrhythmics  
Certain antidepressants and antiseizure medications
7. Try to get your aerobic exercise done before 6 pm or at least 3 hours before bedtime

### **Nighttime Tension and Anxiety**

Avoid anxiety-provoking activities before going to bed such as:

8. Reading or watching the news before going to bed  
paying bills before bed
9. Checking your financial reports or the stock market
10. Avoid arguments before bedtime
11. Schedule difficult conversations well before bedtime and preferable at least 3 hours before attempting to sleep
12. Try to achieve some action plan or resolution of a discussion or an argument before trying to go to sleep

### **Sleep Planning and Bedroom Preparation**

13. Plan your sleep by putting it into your schedule or knowing you are planning on 8 ½ to 9 hours in your bed
14. Be regular Try to go to sleep and wake up the same times each day. This will help train your biological clock
15. Avoid getting in bed after midnight as late hour sleep is not as helpful as earlier hour sleep, (9:30-12pm vs. after 12 pm)
16. Avoid late afternoon or evening naps
17. Avoid naps longer than 45 minutes unless you are sick or quite sleep deprived
18. Avoid reading stimulating, exciting materials in bed
19. Avoid large meals or spicy foods before bed.
20. Try to eat prior to 3 hours of going to sleep
21. Avoid drinking more than 4-8 ounces of fluid before going to bed
22. Make your bedroom clean in regards to the air especially if you have nasal congestion or are prone to snoring  
Use HEPA or other types of air purifiers/filters. Use the filter on a low setting at night if the noise is soothing.  
Otherwise use the filter on a medium setting for 4-6 hours during the day.  
Consider cleaning the vents in your house 1x a year.  
Avoid toxic glues or other items producing an odor.
23. If you smell mold or a musty smell have your bedroom checked or cultured for mold with culture plates.

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24. If there is mold have the house evaluated for water leaks and air quality issues  
Most people sleep with too much light in their bedroom. Decrease the light in your bedroom and surrounding rooms at least 10 minutes before trying to fall asleep.  
Use dark window shades and or consider a set of eyeshades or a black sock to cover your eyes when trying to sleep.
25. Decrease the irritating noise in your space by closing windows, using ear plugs, or using a white noise generator such as a HEPA air filter etc. Turn off or remove any appliances or clocks that make noise.
26. Make sure your sleeping area is the correct temperature range (not too hot or too cold)
27. Avoid sleeping near electric fields. Try to have your head at least 5 feet away from electric fields, if possible.  
Possible sources of electrical fields include: electrical outlets, clock radios, stereos, computers and monitors.  
Consider moving these devices or moving your bed or your position in the bed. Consider using a Tri Field meter in the 1-3 magnetic range and the electric range to test for these fields.
28. Avoid sleeping on a water bed or an electric mattress because of the excessive heat and the electric fields
29. If your nose is blocked up and you have trouble breathing through it consider taking the steps under suggestions 22-25 and 31. Also consider:  
Using a saline nasal spray (or a homeopathic (Thorne) QC spray or combination spray (Sinus Survival) before bed and in the middle of the night.
31. Try nasal expanders that you wear at night such as breath easy. Make sure you read the instructions and fit them over the lower third of your nose.
32. If you itch at night do steps 22-25 and take steps to decrease the mite and dust amount in your bedrooms.  
Use cotton bedding and wash and dry them at high heat.  
Use Ultra fine allergy pillow and mattress covers.  
Consider replacing your pillows with hypoallergenic pillows once a year
33. To try and fall asleep consider reading a good neutral book
34. When trying to fall asleep remember times of significant relaxation

**If you are having trouble falling asleep or wake up in the middle of the night and can't fall asleep**

35. Don't stay in bed more than 20-30 minutes trying to fall asleep. Leave your bedroom and go to a relaxing room other than the bedroom and read or do a relaxation technique (i.e. meditate.)

**If you are anxious or nervous and have tried the suggestions above under “nighttime tension and anxiety”**

36. Avoid repeated negative judgments about the fact that you are unable to sleep.
37. Use positive self-talk phrases regarding your ability to relax and fall asleep.  
“I can fall asleep”, “I can relax” or “Any amount of sleep that I get is just fine”
38. Try writing in your journal any disturbing thoughts that are running in your mind.
39. Schedule a time during the next few days to deal with whatever you are troubled by
40. If you are having trouble managing what you are nervous or upset about consult your health care provider for treatment suggestions or a counseling/therapy referral