

Support Yourself

Healthy Sleep Habits

Should Happen All Day Long, Experts Say

7 a.m.

Get up at the same time, even on weekends. Your goal? Keep your body's wake-sleep cycle predictable. Sleeping in some days feels good in the short term yet creates long-term havoc.

7:30 a.m. Soak up morning sun. To help set your proper 24-hour clock, expose your body to daylight early.

8 a.m. Get moving.

Regular exercise encourages sleep, possibly because it tires you out and eases stress.

Working out within an hour or two of bedtime may increase alertness and make it more difficult to fall asleep.

10 a.m. Time your caffeine carefully.

A cup of coffee at breakfast or mid morning is okay. If you have chronic trouble sleeping, avoid caffeine for at least 6 hours before bed.

Noon

Feel the light. Mid day exposure to natural light helps strengthen your body's 24-hour sleep-wake cycle.

3 p.m. Nix the naps. Fight the urge for an afternoon snooze even if you didn't sleep much the night before. When bedtime comes, you are ready for sleep.

6 p.m. Have an early, light dinner. Big meals close to bedtime are a no-no, especially if you suffer from heartburn which tends to worsen when you lie down. Avoid alcohol. A drink before bed may help you conk out, yet it increases the likelihood of waking up in the middle of the night.



9 p.m.

Power down your gadgets. The blue light from the laptops and smart phones can slow production of the sleep hormone melatonin. So shut them down 2 hours before you intend to go to sleep. Can't unplug? At least dim the device and hold it a foot or so from your eyes. Or consider special glasses designed to block out blue light.

10 p.m. Power down your brain. About an hour before bed, dim your bedroom lights and do something relaxing: read a physical book (not a lit screen), listen to quiet music, meditate, or have a warm, non-caffeinated drink.



10:55 p.m. Try sensory deprivation. Close your curtains. Try eye shades. Use earplugs. Or turn on a white noise machine.

11 p.m. Go timeless. Watching the minutes tick may be a self-defeating obsession. Put your smart phone or alarm clock someplace where you can't see or reach it, such as under your bed.

3 a.m. If you wake up and can't get back to sleep within 20-minutes, go to another room and do something relaxing. When you start feeling sleepy, head back to bed.



Stress, Worry + Time Issues

MEDITATIONS TO HELP YOU SHIFT TO PRESENT TIME

Sit well in a chair. Feet flat on the floor and weighted. Level your pelvis. Maintain even weight in both sitting bones. Extend your spine. Balance your head on top of your pelvis. Nestle your arms against your side body with hands resting in your lap. Eyes closed.



Become quiet. No movement. Follow 5 breathes. If you move, begin counting your 5 breathes, again. If you make it through 5 breathes without any body adjustments, continue on to 12 breathes.

According to ancient wisdom, 5 breathes connects with your circulatory system. 11 breathes resets all of the body's systems. By breath #12, the molecule of air you breathed in at #1 has returned to the lungs.



LINGERING + STUCK in past time



Follow your breath for 3 cycles. Exhale. Inhale. See the deepest blue you can imagine in your mind's eye. With every exhale, blow out the blue. And with each inhalation, breathe in the next shade lighter of blue that you can imagine. Keep working towards lighter shades of blue until you reach a baby blue.

stuck thinking about FUTURE time



Follow your breath for 3 cycles. Exhale. Inhale. As if looking at post cards or a snap shot, see your self and what you were doing 30 minutes prior to this moment. Keep working backwards in time by 30 minutes. Move quickly and see the snap shot of you in time and space. Do not linger on a particular time period or emotion connected to that moment. Keep moving quickly back in time as if you are flipping through a stack of post cards. No analysis. No judging. Keep moving backwards in time until just before the moment when you woke up this morning.

