

Sleep Hygiene

Tips for better night's sleep

Set a schedule.

For a better night's rest, make a habit of going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Sleeping in is tempting, but can throw off your schedule.

Avoid caffeine later in the day.

Caffeine – even decaf coffee – can stay in the body for up to 10 hours, and can negatively impact your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Use your bed only for sleep.

When your body associates your bed with calming activities, you're more likely to feel tired when you lie down. Using your phone, eating, or working in bed can have the opposite effect, causing your body to associate your bed with wakefulness or even stress.

Make your bedroom comfortable for sleep: cool, quiet, and dark.

Ensure your room is adequately cool, quiet, and dark to trigger your body's natural circadian rhythms. Use whatever you need to achieve this (eye mask, fan, white noise, thick curtains, etc.).

Turn off screens.

The blue light emitted by phones, computers, TVs, and other screens can disrupt the body's natural sleep rhythm, and make you feel more awake. An hour before going to bed, switch to screenless activities.

Don't force yourself to sleep.

If you haven't fallen asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something calming, like reading, journaling, or drawing. But remember, avoid screens and anything stimulating.

Eat your fruits and vegetables.

Research shows that a balanced and varied diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein can help improve sleep.

Exercise regularly, early in the day.

Exercise promotes continuous sleep through the night. Avoid rigorous exercise just before bedtime, as that can circulate endorphins which may make sleep initiation difficult.

Avoid substances that interfere with sleep.

Cigarettes, alcohol, and over-the-counter medications may cause fragmented sleep.

Have a comfortable pre-bedtime routine.

A regular routine helps prepare the mind for bed and train the body to wind down at the end of the day. This could include a bath or shower, skin care routine, yoga or meditation, journaling, etc.

Other resources for sleep

Over-the-counter sleep supplements:

- L-theanine: 100-400mg at bedtime or twice a day
- Melatonin: 0.5 – 3 mg 60-90 minutes before bedtime
- Passion flower: 500-1000 mg at night
- Lemon balm: 300mg daily
- Magnesium Glycinate: 500 mg at night
- Chamomile: 220-440 mg before bed

Self-directed interactive course from Mayo Clinic on CBT for insomnia:

<https://mccmscontent.mayo.edu/PatientEducation/PatientLearning/index.html#/>

Helpful apps:

- BetterSleep
- Sleepiest
- Sleep Cycle
- Pzizz
- Mintal Tracker
- Slumber
- Pillow
- Aura

Books about sleep:

Why We Sleep: Unlocking the power of sleep and dreams by Matthew Walker

The Sleep Revolution: Transforming your life, one night at a time by Arianna Huffington

Mindfulness for Insomnia: a four-week guided program to relax your body, calm your mind, and get the sleep you need by Catherine Polan Orzech and William Moorcroft

Sharing the Covers: Every couple's guide to better sleep by Wendy Troxel

Hello Sleep: The science and art of overcoming insomnia without medications by Jade Wu