



Sleep Hygiene Instructions ©

Sleep can be improved by following some simple suggestions:

- Use your bedroom **only** for sleep; do not work or do other activities that lead to extended arousal.
- Schedule a relaxing period 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. This means avoiding stressful situations and/or conversations that may prevent falling asleep. Practice a bedtime ritual. Reading before lights-out may be helpful if it is not work related.
- A hot bath or shower for 15 to 30 minutes within 2 hours before bedtime can ease muscle tension. A hot drink (without caffeine) may help you relax as well as warm you.
- Your bed should be comfortable (not too soft or too firm), large enough, and in a quiet, dark, well-ventilated room, kept at a cool temperature. Earplugs and eyeshades are OK.
- Keep a regular schedule. Always go to bed and get out of bed at the same time 7 days a week. Do not go to bed until you feel sleepy. Do not expose yourself to bright light if you need to get up at night.
- Limit caffeine intake-no more than three cups, no later than 11 a.m.
- Do not smoke after 7 p.m. Do not smoke to get yourself back to sleep, or even better, give up smoking entirely.
- Practice light use of alcoholic beverages. Avoid use of alcohol after 6 p.m. – alcohol can fragment sleep during the second half of the night.
- Do not eat or drink heavily 3 hours before bedtime. A light bedtime snack (e.g. warm milk or a few crackers) may help. If you have trouble with stomach regurgitation, be especially careful to avoid heavy metals and spices in the evening. The head of the bed may need to be raised.
- Learn simple self-hypnosis to use if you wake at night. Do not try too hard to sleep; instead, concentrate on the pleasant feeling of relaxation.
- Get regular exercise at least 3-4 times per week, preferably 40 minutes each day, of an activity that causes sweating. It is best to finish exercise at least 6 hours before bedtime.
- Be consistent with naps during the day – either take them regularly (10 to 15 minutes, 8 hours after morning arising), or do not take them at all.
- Above all, do not try too hard. If you cannot fall asleep, do not lie in bed frustrated, watching the clock. Keep the clock face turned away, and do not seek out what time it is when you wake at night. Leave your bedroom to relax, and go back when you feel sleepy again.

If your problem persists, speak to your family physician; you may require further evaluation by a sleep specialist.