

Tips for Better Sleeping

In the morning ...

- Get up around the same time each day, even on weekends.

During the day ...

- Exercise regularly during the day, but avoid exercising in the late evening.
- Try to reduce stress in your life by changing the things that cause stress.
- Caffeine ingested after noon may delay sleep onset and contribute to “light” sleep and nighttime awakenings.
- Use the bed only for sleep and intimacy. (Do not eat, read, or watch TV in bed!)
- Avoid naps late in the afternoon and evening.
- Avoid cigarettes. (If you smoke, try to quit smoking entirely. Cutting back on smoking without quitting may lead to nicotine withdrawal in the middle of the night, awakening you.)

In the evening ...

- Avoid “stimulating” mind activities in the few hours preceding bedtime such as reading technical journals, paying bills, problem solving, etc.
- Alcohol within 5 hours of sleep will contribute to nighttime awakenings.
- Avoid foods, beverages, and medications that may contain stimulants.
- Avoid heavy meals and/or a lot of liquid intake close to bedtime.

Before bed ...

- Keep a “to do” journal. Write down all the things you are worrying about. Then write down what you can do tomorrow. Mark the other things “later in the week.” This will help clear your mind of worry.
- Go to bed at the same time, even on weekends.
- Try a relaxing bedtime routine (e.g., soaking in a bath, drinking warm milk).
- Keep light levels very low after sunset, keep the bedroom very dark and uncluttered, and the temperature comfortable.
- Consider using white noise, such as fan blowing.

If you can't fall asleep ...

- Try not to focus on falling asleep, for example, by “clock watching.” (Turn the clock around)
- If unable to go to sleep in about 20 minutes, get out of bed and find a quiet place to do a quiet activity, such as read a non-suspenseful book/magazine, meditate, listen to music, or do relaxation exercises until sleepy.

If you have medicine to help you sleep ...

- Place your sleep medicine on your nightstand with a glass of water nearby. Only take the medicine if you are unable to fall asleep, or if you wake up within a couple hours of falling asleep.
- Some sleep medications may make you drowsy and tired the next day. Notify your doctor or pharmacist if this happens and do not perform any activities that require alertness.