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Tips for A Good Night's Sleep ★

*Adapted from Your Guide
to Healthy Sleep, National
Heart, Lung, and Blood
Institute, NIH Medline Plus*



1 Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Sleeping later on weekends won't fully make up for a lack of sleep during the week and will make it harder to wake up early on Monday morning, so try not to vary your routine by more than an hour.

Exercise is great, but not too late in the day.

Try to exercise for at least 30 minutes on most days but not within 2 or 3 hours of your bedtime.



3 Avoid caffeine whatever the source, including chocolate, as its effects can take as much as 8 hours to wear off fully, so a cup of coffee in the late afternoon can make it hard for you to fall asleep at night. Nicotine is also a stimulant, often causing smokers to sleep only very lightly. In addition, smokers often wake up too early in the morning because of nicotine withdrawal.

Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed.

They may make you feel sleepy initially, but heavy drinking robs you of deep sleep and REM sleep, keeping you in the lighter stages of sleep. Too much alcohol might also impact on your breathing, and may also cause you to wake up in the middle of the night when the effects of the alcohol have worn off.



5 Avoid large meals and drinks late at night. A light snack is alright, but a large meal can cause indigestion that interferes with sleep. Drinking too many liquids at night can cause you to wake up to empty your bladder.

If possible, avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep. Some commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure or asthma medications, as well as some over-the-counter and herbal remedies for coughs, colds or allergies, can disrupt sleep patterns. If you have trouble sleeping, ask your GP whether anything you're taking might be contributing to your insomnia and can be taken at other times.





7 Don't take naps after 3pm. Naps can help make up for lost sleep, but late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

8 Relax before bed. Don't overschedule your day so that no time is left for unwinding. A relaxing activity, such as reading or listening to music, should be part of your bedtime ritual.



9 Take a hot bath before bed. The drop in body temperature after getting out of the bath may help you feel sleepy, and the bath can help you relax and slow down so you're more ready to sleep.

10 Have a good sleeping environment. Remove anything from your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, such as your phone or tv, and avoid the temptation to over-heat your bedroom: we sleep better when the room is on the cool side. Having a comfortable mattress and pillow can help promote a good night's sleep. People who find sleep hard to come by often watch the clock. Turn the clock's face out of view so you don't worry about the time while trying to fall asleep.



11 Have the right sunlight exposure. Daylight is important in regulating daily sleep patterns. Try to get at least 30 minutes of natural sunlight each day, ideally in the morning, and turn down bright lights before bedtime.

12 Don't lie in bed awake tossing and turning. If you find yourself still awake after 20 minutes, or if you are starting to feel anxious or worried about not falling sleep, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.



See a health professional if you continue to have trouble sleeping. If you consistently find it difficult to fall or stay asleep and/or feel tired or not well-rested during the day despite spending enough time in bed at night, you may have a sleep disorder or a health or emotional problem that may be disturbing your sleep.