



**Top Tips
for
Better Sleep**

INTRODUCTION

Sleeping well is a habit that you can learn!

Small changes can have big effects.

Start today by following these guidelines

1. TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

- ❖ Do not drink caffeine: no tea, coffee, or Coca-Cola after 4 o'clock.
- ❖ Do not eat a big or spicy meal late in the evening.
- ❖ Do not go to bed hungry.
- ❖ Avoid alcohol as it interferes with sleep.

2. PHYSICAL EXERCISE

- ❖ Exercise, such as a brisk walk, in the late afternoon can help to make your body tired and help you to sleep.
- ❖ Try to do some exercise every day.
- ❖ Just don't do it too close to bedtime. Make sure your exercise sessions end at least a couple of hours before bedtime.

3. NAP - WISELY

When done right, a little daytime snooze won't destroy your night time sleep, and can boost memory, alertness and job performance while you're at it. Just make sure you limit your nap to 30 minutes, max, and don't snooze too close to bedtime.

4. HAVE A REGULAR BEDTIME ROUTINE

This teaches your body when it's time to go to sleep.

- ❖ Have a soothing drink like chamomile tea or a milky drink
- ❖ Have a bath, or a routine of washing your face and brushing your teeth
- ❖ Go to bed at the same time each night
- ❖ When in bed think of nice things (e.g. think of 5 nice things that happened that day – they might be big or small, such as nice conversation, seeing the sunshine, or hearing nice music on the radio)
- ❖ Do a relaxed breathing exercise (one hand on stomach the other on your chest, deliberately slow your breathing, breathe deeply in your stomach instead of high in your chest).
- ❖ Try and wake up the same time every day, even if this is tiring to begin with.

5. COPING WITH BAD DREAMS CAN BE DIFFICULT

Some people don't like relaxation before going to sleep, or are scared of letting go. If that is you, try these preparation techniques instead:

- ❖ Prepare yourself in case you have bad dreams by thinking of a bad dream then think of a different ending for it. Practice this new ending many times before going to sleep.
- ❖ Remind yourself that you are at home, that you are safe. Imagine your street, buses, local shops, etc.
- ❖ Practice imagining yourself waking up from a bad dream and reorienting yourself to the present, to safety by splashing your face, touching special object, have a bottle of rose or lavender essential oil to sniff, going to window to see surroundings.
- ❖ When you wake up from a bad dream – move your body if you can and reorient yourself immediately (touching an object, wetting your face, going to the window, talk to yourself in a reassuring way)

6. MAKE YOUR BEDROOM A PLEASANT PLACE TO BE

- ❖ Keep it clean and tidy
- ❖ Introduce pleasant smells such as a drop of lavender oil onto the pillow
- ❖ Get extra pillows

7. RESIST THE URGE THE SNOOZE

- ❖ Sleep caught between snoozing of your alarm is not high-quality sleep
- ❖ You don't have to launch out of bed in the morning, but setting the alarm for a slightly later time and skipping a snooze cycle or two could bring big benefits.

8. SLIP ON SOME SOCKS

Some people have the unlucky lot in life of colder-than-comfortable extremities. But having warm hands and feet seems to predict how quickly you'll fall asleep. Speed up the process by pulling on a pair of clean socks before climbing into bed.

9. KEEP YOUR BEDROOM DARK

Even the most inconspicuous glow – like that from a digital alarm clock – can disrupt your shut-eye. If you can't seal up all the light sources in your room, consider using a comfy eye-mask.

10. POWER DOWN AN HOUR BEFORE BED

Dim the lights and turn off all devices – smartphones, laptops, TV's, all of which belong outside the bedroom – about 60 minutes before bedtime. Bright light is one of the biggest triggers to our brains that it's time to be awake and alert, so start sending the opposite signal early.

11. CUT CAFFEINE BY THE AFTERNOON

Your afternoon jolt stays in your system longer than you might think. Cut the caffeine by early afternoon to guarantee it won't keep you up in bed later.

12. AVOID HEAVY MEALS WHEN IT'S LATE

Your body isn't meant to be digesting while you sleep, so a big meal too close to bedtime may keep you up at night. Protein is especially hard to digest, so if you have to eat late, opt for lighter food.

13. RESERVE THE BED FOR SLEEP

Reading in bed is a form of relaxation, right? Yes, and no. A mystery or any other book that demands your emotional and intellectual attention may be more distracting than relaxing. Opt for lighter reading before bed and try and keep it to the couch or your favourite comfy chair.

14. KEEP A CONSTANT SLEEP/WAKE SCHEDULE, EVEN ON WEEKENDS

Sticking to your work-week sleep and wake schedule over the weekend sounds like torture to most of us, but it's actually a wise move where sleep is concerned. Staying up and sleeping in later than normal can shift your body's natural clock in the same way that flying cross country travel does. This so-called social jet-lag can make it extra difficult to fall asleep when Sunday night rolls around, making for even more unpleasant Monday mornings.

15. WORK THROUGH YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE DAY BEFORE GETTING INTO BED

If your mind is racing when you go to bed, instead of forcing yourself to try and fall asleep, a better approach would be to take some time to make lists to do tomorrow and clear your mental desktop of the stuff that you still have to think about and then get in to bed.

16. TAKE A HOT BATH

A cozy soak raises your body temperature slightly. Then, when you hop out, you'll cool down quickly, which mimics the natural drop in body temperature caused by the brain as it readies the body for sleep. A warm bath before bed helps you to fall asleep more quickly as well as get a better quality sleep.

17. EXPERIMENT WITH PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

The relaxation exercise involves tensing then relaxing the muscles throughout the body, directing your attention to each as you go. It can improve sleep quality and reduce fatigue.

18. VISUALIZE

It might feel a little silly the first time you try it, but go ahead and imagine yourself somewhere clam, relaxing and sleep-inducing. This deep relaxation method can slow brain wave activity, coaxing you toward sleep.

19. GET SOME SUNLIGHT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING

There's nothing quite like bright light to trigger your brain to stay awake and alert. Getting some natural light – you'll want to aim for about 15 minutes – first thing in the morning can help night owls reset their biological clocks and ease into sleep a little earlier.

20. DON'T STRESS ABOUT SLEEP

Don't stress yourself out about getting adequate sleep. The more anxious you get about getting enough sleep, the more difficult it will be to actually get any.

21. AVOID DRINKING TOO MANY LIQUIDS TOO CLOSE TO BEDTIME

Don't go dehydrating yourself, but consider cutting off your water supply a couple of hours before bed to save yourself middle-of-the-night trips to the toilet.

22. DON'T SMOKE

Nicotine, like caffeine, is a stimulant, and consequently could keep you up at night. Smokers are four times more likely to say they feel tired when they wake up than nonsmokers.

23. STRUGGLING TO FALL ASLEEP

Bed is for sleeping, so if you cannot sleep after 30 minutes, get up and do another activity elsewhere such as light reading or listening to music (try and avoid TV as it can wake you up). After 15 minutes return to bed and try to sleep again. If you still can't sleep after 30 minutes get up again. Repeat this routine as many times as necessary and only use your bed for sleeping in.



'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'

John 10:10