

# Sleep Hygiene



*A Great Day Begins with a Good Night's Sleep*

**1. Maintain a regular sleep and wake time schedule including weekends.**

A regular waking time helps with sleep onset at night. It is important to keep a regular bedtime and wake-time, even on the weekends.

**2. Establish a regular bedtime routine.**

Avoid activities before bedtime like working, paying bills or family problem-solving. Stress prior to sleep is linked to failing sleep quality. Try to “rest” and slow your body down, prior to bedtime.

**3. Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.**

Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep. Consider using blackout curtains, ear plugs, "white noise," humidifiers, fans and other devices.

**4. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.**

Make sure your mattress is comfortable and supportive. The one you have been using for years may have exceeded its life expectancy – about 9 or 10 years for quality mattresses.

**5. Avoid nicotine use close to bedtime.**

Nicotine is a stimulant. Smoking before bed makes it more difficult to fall asleep. Difficulty sleeping is another reason to quit smoking.

**6. Avoid caffeine close to bedtime.**

Caffeine is a stimulant, which means it can produce an alerting effect. Avoiding caffeine within 6-8 hours of going to bed can help improve sleep quality.

**7. Avoid alcohol close to bedtime.**

Although many people think of alcohol as a sedative, it actually disrupts sleep, causing nighttime awakenings. Consuming alcohol leads to a night of less restful sleep.

**8. Use your bedroom only for sleep.**

Take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment. If you associate a particular activity with anxiety about sleeping, omit it from your bedroom.

**9. Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your regular bedtime.**

Eating too much may make you less comfortable when settling down for bed. Restrict fluids close to bedtime to prevent nighttime awakenings to go to the bathroom.

**10. Exercise regularly.**

In general, exercising regularly makes it easier to fall asleep and contributes to sounder sleep; however, finish your exercise at least 3 hours before bedtime.



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