

Sleep Hygiene



Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Considerable research has gone into developing guidelines and strategies designed to enhance good sleeping, which can provide long-term solutions to sleep difficulties.

Sleep Hygiene Tips

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is purposely paying attention in the present moment without judgment. It helps you become less reactive and 'this frame of mind' can help you fall into a tranquil state of slumber.

- **Get Regular.** Train your body to sleep well by going to bed and getting up at more or less the same time every day (even weekends & vacations!).
- **Find Your Breath!** Deep breathing calms your central nervous system. When your mind starts to chatter, acknowledge the thoughts and shift your focus to your breath.
- **Practice Guided Relaxation.** This is a gentle technique that directs you to move through different regions of your body and invite relaxation with your breath. Do this any time, day or night.
- **Try Restorative Yoga Before Bed.** This helps with the mind/body connection and allows your whole self to relax before trying to fall asleep.
- **Use Essential Oils.** Using your senses is a great way to cultivate better sleep. Try spraying lavender on your pillow or use in a diffuser in your bedroom.

Stress Management

Ever noticed how much better you sleep on vacation away from the stresses of life? Your overall stress level affects your sleep and unfortunately the Sleep-Stress Cycle is far too familiar for many of us.

- **Re-frame Your Thinking.** Our thoughts control our feelings so changing the way you think often changes the way you feel. When you experience a strong feeling, take a moment to write down and what you were thinking. Brainstorm other thoughts and see if it changes how you feel.
- **Try Coping Strategies.** Talk about your feelings, write in a journal, change the way you look at a situation, develop new ways of doing things, etc.
- **Create a Reverse Bucket List.** Write down everything you've accomplished instead of a list of things you haven't done but want to do.
- **Practice Gratitude.** This can help you be more positive, increase happiness and improve sleep!

Exercise

Regular daily movement, physical activity, or exercise helps reduce stress and 'tires out' your body making it easier to fall asleep quickly and to stay asleep.

- **Get Moving!** Start small by gathering your supplies (gym clothes, shoes, etc.) and schedule your workout for the day and/or week.
- **Make it Fun!** Try different activities (walking, dance, fitness classes, strength training, etc.) and do something you enjoy and will look forward to.
- **Try Different Times of Day.** Figure out what time of day is best for you, your family and your sleep.
- **Avoid Exercise 2 hours Before Bed.** Exercise increases your core temperature which makes it harder to calm your nervous system and fall asleep.
- **Aim for 150 minutes of Exercise Weekly.** This amount is recommended to improve sleep quality.

Nutrition

Some food, nutrients and habits enhance sleep while others act as stimulants that can impair sleep.

- **Consume Any/All Caffeine BEFORE 12:00 noon.** This includes caffeine from food and beverages. Aim for <200mg of caffeine daily (the amount in 10 ounces of coffee) as caffeine is a stimulant.
- **Maintain Healthy Glucose Levels.** When glucose spikes and crashes, your energy levels wax and wane. "Anchor" all feedings by pairing protein and healthy fat with intact whole grains and/or unprocessed carbohydrates.
- **Eliminate Sugar and Processed Carbohydrates.** These foods can impair your ability to fall asleep due to the spike and crash in glucose that occurs.
- **Increase Magnesium Rich Foods.** Aim for 3-4 servings daily of foods like beans, greens, nuts and seeds. Magnesium, the "relaxation" mineral, is necessary for calming and relaxing the body.
- **Avoid Food and Drink 3 hours Before Bed.** When your body is digesting, it isn't resting. Going to bed on an empty stomach can also be distracting, so plan your meals and snacks accordingly.
- **Eliminate Alcohol Late in the Evening.** Alcohol disrupts sleep so avoid it 4-6 hours before bed.

Physical Environment

Changing your physical environment and routine can drastically improve sleep.

- **Use Your Bed for Sleep and Sex.** Nothing else!
- **Put Down Your Phone, Computer and TV.** Avoid electronics an hour before bedtime.
- **Create a Sleep Ritual.** Decide what activities work for you to transition to bed- take a relaxing bath or do breathing or stretching for 10 minutes, put on soft music, etc. Signal your body that it's sleep time!
- **Turn Down the Lights & Adjust the Thermostat.** Create a calm, inviting environment. The cooler the better when it comes to sleep!
- **Write it Down!** Keep a pen and paper by your bed and write down your thoughts for the morning.

Sleep Hygiene Tip List



This checklist is intended to be a guide for strategies you can do throughout the day to help promote better sleep. **Pick 3-4 strategies to focus on at a time.** Try to pick 1 strategy from each category and then as they become habits, gradually incorporate more of the other strategies into your daily routines.

MORNING



- Wake mindfully and peacefully
- Before you rise, breathe and notice your body
- Practice re-framing your thinking (during shower)
- Schedule your workout
- Consume any/all caffeine BEFORE 12:00 noon

DURING THE DAY



- Practice guided relaxation
- Practice deep breathing
- Maintain a healthy glucose level
- Eliminate sugar and processed carbs, especially at bedtime
- Increase magnesium rich foods
- Identify one coping strategy for one current problem
- Start or add to a reverse bucket list
- Workout (>2 hr before bed)
- Refrain from using your bed for anything but sleep and sex

EVENING



- Eat a small serving of whole, unprocessed carbs with dinner
- Stop eating and drinking at least 3 hours before bedtime
- Eliminate alcohol late in the evening
- Add extra time to sleep during difficult exercise days
- Turn down the lights
- Turn down the volume
- Adjust the thermostat
- Turn off the TV
- Put down the phone and computer
- Stretch gently
- Practice restorative yoga
- Write in a sleep journal
- Spray pillow with lavender
- Write down three things you are grateful for

	Mindfulness
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	Exercise
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