

Sleep Hygiene Recommendations

Do not go to bed until you are drowsy. Sleep is a voluntary process.

Maintain a consistent wake up time every morning, including weekends.

Do not nap. Napping interferes with falling and staying asleep at night.

Get regular exposure to sunlight in the morning and late afternoon. Avoid bright lights before bedtime. Exposure to sunlight helps your biological clock.

Make sure your bed is comfortable.

Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet. Darkness tells your biological clock that it is nighttime. If needed, create consistent background noise (e.g. a fan or humidifier) that masks sounds that would wake you up.

Keep your bedroom temperature comfortable and cool. Extreme hot or cold temperatures will disrupt your sleep.

Do not watch TV, listen to the radio, read, eat, or work in your bedroom.

Make the last hour before bed a “wind-down time.” If you have things on your mind, write them down and then engage in relaxing and pleasant activities.

Have a light carbohydrate snack (e.g. cheese and crackers or cereal with milk) at bedtime. The light snack is a final signal to your biological clock concerning bedtime and prevents night hunger.

Eat regular meals. Regular meals are a signal to the body’s internal clock about time of day. Do not eat a large meal within three hours of bedtime. Avoid high content of sugar and meals in the evening. If you get up during the night, don’t eat.

Avoid excessive liquids after dinner: no more than eight to ten ounces. A full or partially full bladder contributes to awakenings.

Do not consume caffeine in the evenings or within eight hours of bedtime. Caffeine makes it difficult to fall asleep.

Do not use alcohol to help you fall asleep or consume alcohol within three hours of bedtime. It may help you fall asleep, but will disrupt your sleep during the night, causing frequent awakenings.

Tobacco products will disrupt your sleep. If you smoke, don’t smoke within four hours of bedtime or during the night if you wake up.

Exercise regularly, but do not engage in activities that raise your body temperature (e.g. a warm bath) within three hours of bedtime. Regular exercise improves sleep quality, but exercising or taking a warm bath close to bedtime can disrupt sleep onset. The best time to exercise to help sleep is in the afternoon or early evening.