

Tips for Sleeping

When you're filled with emotional pain and have a million worries, it is hard to get a good night's sleep. Don't be concerned if you don't get a full night's sleep every night, because people can manage on less sleep than they think. However, these tips should help to get some of that needed shut-eye.

Exercise Early in the Day

Twenty to thirty minutes of exercise every day can help you sleep, but be sure to exercise in the morning or afternoon. Exercise stimulates the body and aerobic activity before bedtime may make falling asleep more difficult.

Check Your Iron Level

Iron deficient women tend to have more problems sleeping so if your blood is iron poor, supplement might help your health and your ability to sleep.

Create a Better Sleep Environment

Make sure your bed is large enough and comfortable. If you are disturbed by a restless bedmate, switch to a queen or king-size bed. Test different types of mattresses. Try therapeutic shaped foam pillows that cradle your neck or extra pillows that help you sleep on your side.

Get comfortable cotton sheets.

Make Your Bedroom Primarily a Place for Sleeping

It is not a good idea to use your bed for paying bills, doing work, etc. Help your body recognize that this is a place for rest or intimacy.

Keep Your Bedroom Peaceful and Comfortable

Make sure your room is well ventilated and the temperature consistent. And try to keep it quiet. You could use a fan or a "white noise" machine to help block outside noises.

Hide Your Clock

A big, illuminated digital clock may cause you to focus on the time and make you feel stressed and anxious. Place your clock so you can't see the time when you are in bed.

Establish Better Pre-Sleep Habits

Keep a regular schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekends. Keeping a regular schedule will help your body expect sleep at the same time each day.

Don't oversleep to make up for a poor night's sleep – doing that for even a couple of days can reset your body clock and make it hard for you to get to sleep at night.

Incorporate Bedtime Rituals

Listening to soft music, sipping a cup of herbal tea, etc., cues your body that it's time to slow down and begin to prepare for sleep.

Relax for a While Before Going to Bed

Spending quiet time can make falling asleep easier. This may include meditation, relaxation and/or breathing exercises, or taking a warm bath. Try listening to recorded relaxation or guided imagery programs.

Don't Eat a Late Large, Heavy Meal

This can cause indigestion and interfere with your normal sleep cycle. Drinking too much fluid before bed can cause you to get up to urinate. Try to eat your dinner at least two hours before bedtime.

Bedtime Snacks Can Help

An amino acid called tryptophan, found in milk, turkey, and peanuts, helps the brain
Tips for better daytime habits

Do Not Nap During the Day

If you are having trouble sleeping at night, try not to nap during the day because you will throw off your body clock and make it even more difficult to sleep at night. If you are feeling especially tired, and feel as if you absolutely must nap, be sure to sleep for less than 30 minutes, early in the day.

Limit Caffeine and Alcohol

Avoid drinking caffeinated or alcoholic beverages for several hours before bedtime. Although alcohol may initially act as a sedative, it can interrupt normal sleep patterns.

Don't Smoke

Nicotine is a stimulant and can make it difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. Many over-the-counter and prescription drugs disrupt sleep. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669).

Expose Yourself to Bright Light/Sunlight Soon After Awakening

This will help to regulate your body's natural biological clock. Likewise, try to keep your bedroom dark while you are sleeping.