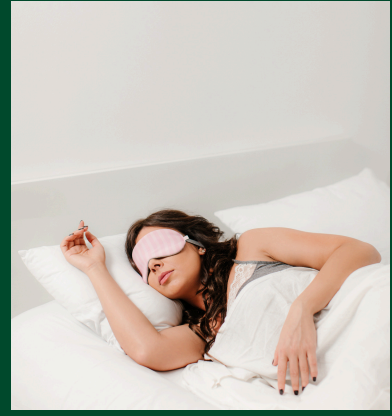


# SLEEP HYGIENE



**Here are the basics for improving sleep. Good sleep improves our mental health.**

- ☐ Stick to a sleep schedule, even on the weekends. Our bodies form habits easily.
- ☐ Napping? Be cautious - naps can throw off your sleep schedule.
- ☐ Light emitted by electronic devices can suppress the production of melatonin.
- ☐ Exercise regularly (30 min 3 times a week) and eat well. People who exercise can sleep longer and faster. DPA reduces anxiety as it promotes the release of endorphins that can help regulate the sleep-wake cycle. Exercising in the late afternoon and early evening can help you fall asleep, more so than if you exercise in the morning. Try nighttime yoga, stretching or meditation.
- ☐ A bedtime routine can signal to your body that it is time to sleep. The routine can include taking a bath, putting on PJs, brushing teeth, reading or listening to music or podcasts or an audio book on the couch before going to bed.
- ☐ Limit stimulants: caffeine and nicotine can affect ability and quality of sleep.
- ☐ Too much (more than 9 hours) or too little sleep (less than 7 hours) can have adverse effects on your health.
- ☐ Talk to your doctor about your sleep concerns. Do you possibly have sleep apnea? Get it checked out.
- ☐ What you say about your sleep matters. Although it is recommended that adults get 7-9 hours of sleep per night, we are able to function on 5 hours of sleep. However, when we have less than 7 hours we have a tendency to tell ourselves we haven't slept enough and it will be a bad day. Change your self-talk and say instead, "I can still have a great day with 5 hours of sleep."
- ☐ Turn off scary or action-filled movies or TV, even the news. Avoid social media. Engaging in or watching a heated back-and-forth can rev up your brain and make it harder to relax.

# Things to Consider

Timing				
<input type="checkbox"/> Set a constant bedtime	<input type="checkbox"/> Set a constant waking time	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop napping if possible	<input type="checkbox"/> Brief waking in the night is normal	<input type="checkbox"/> Notice when your body signals that you are tired and act on that
Sleep Routine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Put away your phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow down your activities 30 minutes before bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Only go to bed when you are drowsy	<input type="checkbox"/> Use your bed for sleeping and intimacy only	<input type="checkbox"/> Write down your to-do list so you don't create one in your mind
Environment				
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you have a quiet, dark room	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiment with temperature - open or close windows, more or fewer blankets	<input type="checkbox"/> White noise may help	<input type="checkbox"/> A sleep mask or ear plugs may help	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider a supportive mattress, comfortable pillows & cozy bedding
Food Intake				
<input type="checkbox"/> No caffeine/nicotine or alcohol for at least 4 hours before bedtime.	<input type="checkbox"/> Eating a healthy, light snack can help you fall asleep	<input type="checkbox"/> Try light cheese & crackers, turkey, banana, warm milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid heavy, spicy and sugary foods	<input type="checkbox"/> Try chamomile tea or hot milk
Mental				
<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid stimulating activities 1-2 hours before bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Use progressive muscle relaxation techniques	<input type="checkbox"/> Meditate, use a sleep app, practice mindfulness	<input type="checkbox"/> Use an app such as "Calm" and listen to their sleep stories.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use a calming breath

Have you tried all of the above and are still struggling going to sleep, waking up in the night, feeling daytime fatigue, difficulty concentrating and/or low mood?

When we spend a lot of time in bed doing things other than sleep, our brain and body learn that bed is a place for these non-sleep things.

<input type="checkbox"/> worrying	<input type="checkbox"/> working	<input type="checkbox"/> eating	<input type="checkbox"/> watching TV, on phone	<input type="checkbox"/> playing with pets
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If you go to bed and you can't fall asleep, go to another room and do something relaxing or boring. Try to distract your negative thoughts by filling your brain with something neutral or pleasant. For example, read a boring article or book, listen to a dull podcast or uninteresting audiobook. Do this until your eyes become heavy and you feel drowsy.

You may have to get up and try again several times before you actually fall asleep, but if you stick with it, your body will respond.

Do not sleep in - get up at your usual time and try again the next night.

To reset your sleep schedule, choose the time you want to wake up. Count back 5 hours and do not go to bed until that time. For example, if you want to wake up at 6 am, go to bed at 1 am. You may find that you are so tired that you fall asleep immediately.

Do this for several days until you fall asleep quickly at 1 am. You can gradually increase the amount you sleep by going to bed at 12:30, then 12, then 11:30, etc. but only if you fall asleep as soon as you go to bed. Maintain your 6 am wake up time and don't hit "snooze".

## Racing Thoughts?

Try "Cognitive Refocusing". You can start to choose some pleasant things to think about before you go to bed. Replay a happy memory, movie or TV show, think about a creative project you are working on, tell yourself a bedtime story from your childhood.

Try "Cognitive Shuffle". This technique, designed by Luc Beaudoin, helps keep your brain occupied instead of focusing on stressful and stimulating thoughts.

- Choose a neutral word such as "braid".
- Go through each letter in the word and imagine and list as many words as you can. For example, start with "b" and imagine balloons, boats, buttons, babies, bottles, etc. Then go to the next letter and repeat.
- This gentle mental distraction tires the brain in a way similar to how natural sleep works, promoting relaxation and aiding falling asleep.

Create a "Worry Time" earlier in the day so you don't worry at night. Set aside time to think about and write your worries and brainstorm possible solutions. At night, remind yourself that you have written your worries down and you will use your scheduled worry time tomorrow. If you wake in the night with worries, try writing them down and say you will think about them tomorrow.

### Challenge your worries:

1. Take a worry and rate it's intensity on a scale of 1-10.
2. Look at all the evidence for and against the worry.
3. Challenge and reframe the worry by looking at another possible perspective or explanation.
4. What parts of this worry are in your control and out of your control? The parts in your control may lead to some steps you can take to address the worry.

Once in bed, try to stay still and think of turning everything in your body "off". If you read, lie down completely and focus on the book and not your thoughts, if you wake in the night, try to stay in a sleepy state instead of getting up or talking to your partner.



**May you have a peaceful sleep tonight!**

