

Rules for Better Sleep

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1. **Don't spend too much time in bed. Staying in bed for an excessively long time leads to shallow and less restful sleep. Sleep as much as needed to feel refreshed the next day. The time you spend in bed should nearly match the amount of time you are actually asleep.**
2. **Get up at the same time each day, seven days a week. This helps set your biological clock and decreases the likelihood of insomnia.**
3. **Daily exercise can help deepen sleep. Do not exercise too close to bedtime; plan to finish at least four hours before you turn in.**
4. **Make your bedroom comfortable and free of disturbing noise and light. Carpeting, insulated curtains, and closing the door can help.**
5. **Keep room temperature moderate. A room that is too warm or too cold can disturb sleep.**
6. **Eat regular meals and do not go to sleep hungry. A light snack before bedtime (especially carbohydrates) may help sleep. Avoid greasy or heavy foods.**
7. **Try to avoid drinking a lot of liquids in the evening in order to minimize the need for nighttime bathroom trips.**
8. **Avoid alcohol in the evening. While alcohol can help tense people fall asleep more easily, the sleep you get when under the influence is fragmented and ultimately not as restful.**
9. **Try not to smoke when you are having trouble sleeping – nicotine is a stimulant.**
10. **Don't take your problems to bed. Plan some time in the evening to work on specific problems or to plan the next day's activities.**
11. **Reduce or eliminate caffeinated beverages in the evening.**
12. **Only use the bedroom for sleep and sexual activity. Do not read, eat, or watch TV in bed. This helps train your brain to see the bedroom as a place to sleep.**
13. **Don't watch the clock; doing so will only make you more frustrated if you are having trouble sleeping. Put the clock under your bed or turn it so you can't see it.**
14. **Avoid daytime naps. Staying awake during the day helps you sleep better at night.**
15. **Don't "try" to fall asleep. If you are still wide awake 15-20 minutes or so after retiring, leave the bedroom and do something different like reading a boring book. Don't engage in stimulating activity and keep the light levels low. Return to bed only when you feel sleepy.**
16. **Exposure to bright light prior to bedtime may interfere with sleep. When possible, eliminate exposure to bright artificial light (overhead lights, computer screens) in the 2 hours before bedtime. Television viewing is okay if done at a safe distance from the screen (6 feet or more).**