



SLEEP HYGIENE



ROUTINES

Establish a regular routine that includes going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Maintaining a consistent sleep-wake cycle is important to overall health.

DETERMINE HOW MUCH SLEEP YOU NEED

Get an adequate amount of sleep every night. Determine the amount of sleep you need by keeping track of how long you sleep without using an alarm clock for a week. Maintain this “personal” sleep requirement.

DEVELOP SLEEP RITUALS

Develop sleep rituals before going to bed. Do the same things in the same order before going to bed to cue your body to slow down and relax. Do not do any vigorous activities within one hour of bedtime.

LET GO OF THE DAY BEFORE BED

Avoid stress and worries at bedtime. Address tomorrow's activities, concerns, or distractions earlier in the day.

USE YOUR BED FOR SLEEP AND SEX ONLY

Use your bed for sleep and sex only. Other activities in bed, like watching tv, paying bills, or working only serve to initiate worries and concerns. Let your mind associate the bed with pleasure, relaxation, and sleeping.

AVOID HEAVY MEALS AT NIGHT

Avoid heavy meals late in the evenings. Similarly, avoid going to bed hungry. A light snack - especially dairy foods - can help you sleep.

REDUCE CAFFEINE AND NICOTINE

Reduce your intake of caffeine and nicotine 10-12 hours before going to sleep. Stimulants interfere with your ability to fall asleep and interfere with progress into a deep sleep.

AVOID ALCOHOL BEFORE BEDTIME

Avoid alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime. As a depressant that slows brain activity, alcohol may initially make you feel tired, but will eventually fragment your sleep. In addition, being tired intensifies the effects of alcohol. Alcohol also aggravates snoring and sleep apnea.

EXERCISE REGULARLY

Exercise regularly. Regular exercise, even for 20 minutes, 3 times a week, promotes deep sleep. People who have difficulty sleeping should exercise early in the day.

AVOID NAPPING

Avoid or limit napping. Avoiding naps all together will help to ensure that you are tired at night. If you must nap, be sure to nap before 3 pm, and if you must nap, do so for 30 minutes or less.

MAINTAIN YOUR SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Maintain a dark, quiet, and cool room to sleep in. A comfortable sleeping environment is critical to sleeping well.

USE SLEEP AIDS CONSERVATIVELY

Use sleep aids conservatively. Medication is not generally a good long-term solution to help your sleep. Consult with your doctor for more information about the safe use of sleep aids.