

TIPS FOR A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

Almost everyone has trouble sleeping from time to time, though for some trouble sleeping can become an almost nightly affair. There are several things you can do, and behaviors you can change, to improve the quantity and quality of your sleep. These measures are often referred to as “sleep hygiene.” While results may not be immediate, if practiced daily these measures will allow most people to get a good night’s sleep, without the drawbacks of sleeping medicines.

1. Sleep only as much as needed to feel rested.
2. Keep a regular sleep schedule, both on work and non-work days; set an alarm clock to wake up at a fixed time each morning, including weekends.
3. Avoid forcing sleep; go to bed only when sleepy.
4. Get out of bed if unable to fall asleep within 10-15 minutes, and go to another room. Return to bed only when sleepy. Repeat this step as many times as necessary throughout the night.
5. Do not go to bed hungry, but do not eat a large meal within 2-3 hours of bedtime.
6. Deal with, and “set aside,” worries before getting into bed.
7. Do not watch television, read, or eat in bed. Use bed only for sleep and sex.
8. Naps are generally detrimental to evening sleep. For someone who has established brief naps as a long-time practice, and who feels more refreshed and functional after a brief nap, it may be advisable to continue them, though it should be recognized that this will reduce total evening sleep time.
9. Quit smoking.
10. Avoid caffeinated beverages after lunch.
11. Avoid alcohol within 3-4 hours of bedtime.
12. Exercise regularly, preferably a least 20 minutes per day, but not within 3-4 hours of bedtime.