

Recommended Sleep Hygiene Tips

Deep sleep facilitates more REM sleep, reducing awakenings. However, achieving deep sleep requires maintaining reasonable sleep hygiene. Therefore, please consider the following:

- A. When it comes to planning how much time asleep you wish to experience, add 1 hour and plan on spending that much time in bed. For instance, if you want to be asleep for 7 ½ hours, plan on being in bed for 8 ½ hours, because you will likely spend about 1 hour awake, while you are in bed. As a child, adolescent, or young adult, you may spend less time in bed awake, but realize, that you will be awake during some of the time spent in bed.
 - i. So, to find this extra hour, make sleep a higher priority and, in general, it's best to plan to go to sleep an hour earlier, rather than planning on sleeping an hour later. Getting to sleep an hour earlier will also, most likely, help you get back in sync with a more normal circadian rhythm.
 - ii. Try to structure your day, so that you can more easily fall asleep earlier in the evening. This can be done by waking up earlier, exercising more, and avoiding naps and caffeine after mid-afternoon.
- B. Respect your personal circadian rhythm (your natural 24-hour sleep-wake rhythm) by developing and sticking to a regular bedtime and risetime, as best as is practical. Try to experience sunlight during the day and avoid blue light (computer screen time) near bedtime.
- C. Prepare for sleep before bedtime. It is absolutely best to go to sleep when you are tired, so don't become more alert before bedtime. Having to do everything that you typically do to prepare for sleep increases alertness and exposes you to brighter light than is otherwise necessary. Doing many of these tasks 30 to 60 minutes earlier, reduces the likelihood of becoming more alert, when you wish to fall asleep. So, prepare for sleep in advance of your established bedtime.
- D. Reduce nighttime awakenings by doing the following:
 - i. avoid alcohol,
 - ii. avoid caffeine late in the day,
 - iii. avoid eating and drinking fluids within 2 hours of bedtime,
 - iv. take steps to reduce bodily pain as best as possible, and
 - v. maintain the bedroom at a cool, but comfortable temperature.
- E. Another thing to avoid are long (more than 20 to 30 minute) daytime naps particularly later in the day. Naps delay sleep onset, and they reduce Deep sleep and Sleep Time.
- F. Exercise regularly, but well in advance of bedtime. Exercise increases Deep sleep, which prolongs and maintains sleep.

- G. When an awakening occurs, allow yourself to fall back to sleep by assuming a comfortable position and relaxing. Direct your attention to feeling your feet, hands, arms, and legs, focusing on feeling your extremities reduces thinking and avoids engaging your mind.
- H. If pain is keeping you awake, consider consulting your physician to determine its' source and to best treat it. Over time, better sleep can help alleviate pain, but first you must be able to sleep.
- I. Determine if you suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnea, particularly if you snore frequently and awaken each morning unrefreshed. If so, please consult your physician and receive treatment if necessary.

Following these tips may improve your sleep. If you make sleep a higher priority in your life, you will better appreciate the time you spend awake.