

# Tips For Enhancing Sleep



Pain, stress, anxiety and depression often disrupt sleep. Sleep disruption itself can lead to even more pain, stress, anxiety, depression & also weight gain. The following are some tips to work on getting a good night's sleep.

## 1. **Keep regular sleep habits.**

Try to get to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day – even on weekends and on vacation. This will help your body to get into a sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep & get up in the morning.



## 2. **Go to bed as early as possible.**

Our systems, particularly our adrenals do the majority of their recharging or recovering between the hours of 11 pm & 1 am.

Want to get to sleep earlier? Start by setting your bedtime 30 minutes earlier than the time you normally have been getting to sleep. Once you have adjusted to this new bedtime then start by going to bed 30 minutes earlier than this new bedtime until you reach your optimal time for sleep.

## 3. **Avoid daytime naps** unless needed to manage your fatigue.

Naps can boost brain power, but late afternoon naps can interfere with nighttime sleep. If you feel you need to nap during the day, set your alarm for 1 hour. When it goes off, get up & start moving!

## 4. **Get some sun or natural daylight.** The right light exposure, of at least 30 to 60 minutes per day, is key to regulating daily sleep patterns.



## 5. **Exercise daily.**

Regular daytime exercise can improve your nighttime sleep. Avoid exercising within 4 hours of bedtime, which actually can be stimulating and keep you awake.



## 6. **Control stress & anxiety.**

Make time in your day for yourself.  
Include a daily relaxation/meditation exercise.  
Learn & use emotional releasing techniques.





### 7. **Prepare for sleep.**

Wind down before going to bed. Do relaxing activities, such as listening to soft music, doing a relaxation exercise or taking a warm bath, that get you ready to sleep. Avoid watching TV, reading suspense novels or working right up to bedtime.

Decrease your exposure to light in the evening by dimming your household lights.



### 8. **Limit caffeine and alcohol in the late afternoon and evening.**

If consumed too close to bedtime, the caffeine in coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and some medications can keep you from sleeping or sleeping soundly.

Although alcohol is initially a sedative, it becomes a stimulant in the body. Even though it can make you feel sleepy at first, it can disturb your sleep & wake you up later.

### 9. **Avoid large amounts of liquids in the evening.**

Late night trips to the bathroom are not conducive to sleep. If fluids are needed throughout the evening, sip water or herbal teas such as chamomile. Go the bathroom just prior to going to bed.

### 10. **Avoid heavy or spicy meals late in the evening.**

These foods can cause indigestion or heartburn when lying down.

### 11. **Have a small bedtime snack if needed.**

Often a snack is needed near bedtime especially if taking medications at this time. Have a glass of milk or some peanuts as both contain tryptophan, which helps the body relax.



### 12. **Calcium or magnesium supplements if being taken.**

Consider taking these supplements with your evening meal or at bedtime to enhance relaxation.



### 13. **Manage your pain.**

If pain is preventing you from going to sleep or waking you up during the night, it is important to get control over the pain & the underlying condition causing the pain. Work with your health care provider to ensure you are taking the appropriate medications. It is important to take your medications regularly to control the pain or condition.



**14. Manage hormonal symptoms of perimenopause/menopause.**

Following the strategies in this handout may help reduce the symptoms of menopause, such as disrupted sleep & hot flashes. Work with your health care provider to determine if supplementation is needed to balance your hormones.



**15. Adjust any medications that may interfere with sleep in consultation with your health care provider.**

For example if taking prednisone twice daily, discuss with your physician about taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose earlier in the day.

**16. Avoid over the counter sleeping medications or recreational drugs.**

Although it may help you to fall asleep, the type of sleep you get will get will usually not be as helpful as normal sleep. If you take sleep medication from your doctor, it is important to remember that the mark of its success is how you feel during the day, not whether it actually puts you to sleep. Work with your doctor to find the most suitable medication for you.

**17. Reserve your bed only for sleeping and personal time with your partner.**

**18. Create a good sleep environment:**

**Keep your bedroom cool, quiet & dark.**

The best temperature for the bedroom is 18° to 21° (65°F to 70°F).

If noise is a problem, some options include earplugs, soundproofing the room (hanging things on the walls), & devices that emit white noise (eg fans or special natural noise machines).

Limit exposure to light during the night. If a night light is needed to get up during the night consider wearing an eye mask while in bed. Close curtains to limit exposure to street lights. Remove the alarm clock from view.

**Ensure your bed is comfortable.** Use mattress pads that support your body & blankets that are warm, but light on the body.

**Check your bedroom for electro-magnetic fields (EMFs).**

EMFs can disrupt the pineal gland and the production of melatonin and serotonin and may have other negative effects as well. Remove or unplug electrical devices (alarm clocks, phones etc.) you may have in the bedroom. If these devices must be used, keep them at least 3 feet away from the bed.

