

Advices for Good Sleep



Poor Quality of Sleep & Waking Pain Can Create A Vicious Cycle

1. How to sleep faster and better:

- 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 vacations.
- Avoid 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. Even though it can make you feel sleepy, drinking alcohol around bedtime also can disturb sleep)

- Avoid daytime naps.
(Sleeping in the afternoon can interfere with nighttime sleep. If you feel you can't get by without a nap, set an alarm for 1 hour. When it goes off, get up and start moving)
- Reserve your bed for sleeping.

(Watching the late news, reading a suspense novel, or working on your laptop in bed can stimulate you, making it hard to sleep. Keep all reading material and remote controls far from your bed. Do not be tempted by them)

- Time your exercise.

(Regular daytime exercise can improve nighttime sleep. But avoid exercising within 3 hours of bedtime, which actually can be stimulating, keeping you awake. Over one-third of people with arthritis do not practice any exercise)

- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool. Make sure any lights that you turn on at night are dim. Bright light will stimulate you.

(If your bedroom is hot, noisy, or hot, it can make it harder to sleep)

- Avoid liquids and spicy meals before bed.

(Heartburn and late night trips to the bathroom are not conducive to good sleep)

- Wind down before bed.

(Avoid working right up to bedtime. Do relaxing activities, such as listening to soft music or taking a warm bath, that get you ready to sleep. An added benefit of a warm bath is that can soothe aching muscles)

- Avoid Stress:

(Thinking too much about your day and other kinds of worrying can interfere with your ability to fall asleep fast. Worry and anxiety cause stress. Stress releases hormones in the body that inhibit sleep. This week avoid any stressors before bed. If the evening news occasionally upsets you, don't watch it. Avoid making stressful phone calls and discussing stressful topics with your spouse or partner. Think through your day before lying down to prevent the need to process it while you are trying to sleep).

- Set up a place to go when you can't sleep. Have a comfortable chair, a small light and a boring book or a pad of paper. Go there when you can't sleep and just read, doodle or make meaningless lists. Stay there until you are ready to try again. After a few weeks, you won't need to use this place anymore.
- Sex is an approved bed activity that can help you sleep better, why won't you try!

2. Train your Body:

If you read, watch TV or even think in bed, you are telling your body that something other than sleep needs to be done. This is confusing. To retrain your body, send only one message each night: "It's time to sleep."

- **Lie Down and Try to Sleep:** It is really hard to fall asleep if you are not trying. By reading, watching TV or thinking about your day, you are deliberately trying to not fall asleep. Instead, wait until you are tired, lie down and try to sleep. If your mind needs something to do, count your breaths.

- **Watch the Clock:** If you are lying in bed for more than 15 or 20 minutes and not sleeping, get up. Even if you think you are about to fall asleep, get up anyway. The idea is that you need to retrain your body to fall asleep fast. You can only do this by not making it a possibility to linger in bed.
- **Do Something Relaxing:** Once you are out of bed, do something relaxing. Read a calm book, make lists of things (like countries, insects or spices) or doodle. Anything that is calming. Do not turn on bright lights. Do this activity until you become tired again. Do not turn on the TV or sit at a computer.
- **Try Again:** Once you are tired again, lie down again and try to fall asleep. Repeat the steps above. Your first night, you may have to get up three or four times. That's okay. This will decrease with time. Just keep trying. Before you know it, you won't have to get up at all.

Tip: Still I can not sleep

If you already don't read in bed or do anything else, try staying up late for a couple of days. Don't go to bed until you are extremely tired and know you will fall asleep right away. Two or three days of sleep like this, combined with the steps outlined above, should really help your falling asleep skills.

Remember, try this skill for a whole week before moving on. It is important that you master this skill in order to reach your goal.

3. Making use of light and Darkness:

Your body's built-in sleep cycle, known as your circadian rhythms, is largely controlled by the amount of light and dark you are exposed to during your day. By increasing light during the day and dark at night, you will fall asleep faster and sleep better. Good light/dark contrast in your day will give you sleep that feels refreshing. You will become a sleep master. You will feel less tired during the day and sleep better at night.

Try this for a week:

1. **Bright Mornings:** Start each day, for a week, with as much bright light as possible. Don't just turn on one small lamp for your morning rituals, turn on all the lights. While you are eating breakfast, keep as many lights on as possible. Open the shades and curtains and let the sun shine in.
2. **Light Days:** Try to get as much exposure to bright light as possible during your day. If you can, get outside. Sunlight is the best light for your sleep cycle. Take sunlight breaks during the day. Open the shades, turn on all the lights and look out the window (if you are lucky enough to be near one).
3. **Dim Evenings:** A couple of hours before bedtime, make things dim. Turn down the lights. Avoid the computer (which is really just a giant light that you put close to your face) and sit far away from the TV. If you read, use a directed reading light, rather than large lamps or overhead lights that brighten the whole room. Pull the curtains and draw the shades. Don't turn on too many lights while getting ready for bed. A dim light in the bathroom or closet is enough.

4. **Dark Nights:** Make your nights as dark as possible. Draw the curtains, close the shades and keep the lights off. Try a sleep mask if you can't get eliminate enough light. The darker your night, the quicker you will fall asleep.

Tips:

- If you can get 45 minutes of exposure to bright sunlight, research shows that doing so can help keep your sleep cycle on track. You can do this by sitting outside or near a window during your lunch time.
- The most important time to get light exposure is in the morning. If you can get outside during the morning, it will greatly improve your sleep quality. Go for a run, do some gardening or just sit outside to have your breakfast if you can.

Extra Tips:

- Keep a Sleep Diary: Track your sleep and other behaviors for several days to make connections between your daily activities and your sleep quality.