



Good Sleep Hygiene

Basics:

- Avoid napping during the day; it can disturb the normal pattern of sleep and wakefulness.
- Exercise vigorously daily for 30-40 minutes.
- Get sunshine on your skin every day.

Pre-Bed Routine:

- Avoid stimulants such as caffeine less than 4-6 hours before bedtime. And, remember, chocolate has caffeine.
- Food can be disruptive right before sleep; stay away from meals less than an hour before bedtime. Also dietary changes can cause sleep problems, if someone is struggling with a sleep problem; it's not a good time to start experimenting with new dishes.
- Consider light exercise to “calm the mind,” like yoga, or practice meditation or prayer.
- No major emotional conversations prior to bed. It is hard to fall asleep with trouble on your mind.

Set-Up:

- Comfy bed! Make sure that the sleep environment is pleasant and relaxing. The room should not be too hot or cold, or too bright.
- Associate your bed with sleep. It's not a good idea to use your bed to watch TV, listen to the radio, or read. It is best to keep all electronics and gadgets out of the bedroom. Play these things in a common room in the house and make your room a place you go to sleep.
- If any light is needed, use red light only after going to bed. This does not excite the brain as much.

Bedtime Routine:

- Start at the same time EVERY night.
- Do the same routine EVERY night. Get into bed when it is done.
- Consider White Noise. It should be the same every night and have no words or singing. Ocean, rainforest, waves and other sounds are good choices, but pick one and stay with it.
- Some research suggests that Lavender oil on the pillow, under the pillowcase is helpful for sleep onset.

The goal is sleep onset within 30 minutes. These techniques are only recommended because you have sleep problems and only work if done consistently. You should have improved sleep within 3-4 weeks of starting a regular routine. If still having trouble, contact your doctor for further options.