

## **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER SLEEP HYGIENE**

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1. **KEEP REGULAR HOURS-** The best way to ensure a good night of sleep is to stick to a regular schedule. To keep your biologic clock in "sync," always get up at the same time, regardless of how much or little you feel you've slept.
2. **EXERCISE REGULARLY-** Exercise may help to burn off tension, allowing you to "unwind" mentally and physically. The ideal time is late afternoon or early evening. Exercise should be stopped at least 90 minutes before your bedtime.
3. **REDUCE STIMULANTS-** Many people get caffeine daily from coffee, tea, colas and chocolate. Have your last caffeine before noon if you have trouble with sleep. If you are taking any prescription or over the counter medications, ask your doctor whether they may affect your sleep.
4. **SLEEP ON A GOOD BED-** If your bed is older than 8 years, consider getting a new one. A good neck or back support pillow may be helpful.
5. **REDUCE OR STOP SMOKING-** The nicotine found in cigarettes is a stronger stimulant than caffeine. Smokers who break their habit may have dramatic improvements in sleep.
6. **DRINK IN MODERATION-** Even moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages can suppress REM and deep sleep and results in fragmented, unrefreshing sleep.
7. **GET QUALITY AND QUANTITY SLEEP-** Different people may need 4 to 12 hours of sleep to feel fully refreshed. Most people need at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep. We may ask you to keep a diary of sleep times. In general, if you are not asleep within 15 minutes after going to bed, get up, relax, and try again to sleep in about 1 hour if you are sleepy then. Naps of 10-30 minutes may help restore daytime alertness without making sleep onset much more difficult.
8. **SET ASIDE A "WORRY TIME"-** Try to resolve problems early in the evening before going to bed. If distractions follow you to bed, tell yourself to deal with them during the next day's worry time.
9. **DON'T GO TO BED STUFFED OR STARVED-** Avoid late night meals. Avoid snacks that cause gas such as peanuts, beans, fruit or raw vegetables. If you are dieting, don't go to bed hungry. Eat a low calorie snack, such as a banana or apple.
10. **GET A SLEEP RITUAL-** Perform techniques to relax before going to bed on a routine basis. These may include gentle stretching or a warm bath to reduce tension or listening to quiet music, among others. Whatever method you decide on, be sure to follow the ritual each night until it becomes a cue for your body to settle down.
11. **DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK.**
12. **DON'T STAY IN THE BED IF YOU CAN'T SLEEP.** Recondition your brain to know that the bed is for sleeping by ending the practice of spending time in bed anxiously not sleeping. Do something relaxing and not stimulating such as listening to music or looking at a magazine until you become sleepy, then go back to bed.