



Sleeping tips

Know Your Goal

Aim for getting 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep a night.

When should I get help?

- When you are having difficulty sleeping for more than 3 nights a week for three weeks or sooner if you are having daytime sleepiness
- Snoring while sleeping
- Reports from family of long pauses in breathing during sleep

Set a Regular Bedtime

Stick to the same routine as much as possible, even on weekends. Avoid long naps during the day - go for a 15-minute catnap if you must - that may interfere with sleep at night.

Change Your Sleeping Space

Get rid of distractions such as televisions, computers, stereos, books and magazines. Install curtains or blinds to block out light. If outside sounds are bothering you, try a fan or a white noise machine. Many people also sleep better in cooler temperatures.

Eat Smart

Have your last meal about two or three hours before bedtime. Avoid spicy, fatty or fried foods and sugary nighttime snacks, which can cause heartburn or rapid shifts in blood sugar that wake you up in the middle of the night. A light, healthy snack, such as whole-grain crackers with low-fat milk, helps some people fall asleep.

Avoid Alcohol and Caffeine

Stop drinking at least an hour before you go to bed and reduce or eliminate alcohol and caffeine. Note: The stimulant effect of caffeine can last for hours, so steer clear of it after lunch if you're having trouble sleeping.

Exercise Tips

Exercise 5 times a week for at least 20 minutes a day. Avoid strenuous activity within three hours of bedtime.

Get Outside

Exposure to sunlight increases the body's production of hormones that help you fall asleep (put on sunscreen if you'll be outside for more than 10 or 15 minutes).

Invest in a Good Mattress

If you're wake up stiff, numb or achy, or if you seem to get a better sleep away from home, you may need a new mattress. While brands vary widely, most are ready for replacement after five to seven years. Sags, lumps or tears are obvious signs. When shopping for a mattress, lie down on each one for a few minutes to see if it's comfortable for you.



Invest in a Good Pillow

Aim for a cushion that holds your head in the same relationship to your shoulders and spine as when you're standing upright with good posture.

Don't Get Frustrated

If you've been in bed for 20 to 30 minutes and haven't gone to sleep, go to another room and do something relaxing - read, write in a journal or listen to quiet music (no exercise, chores or horror movies). Go back to bed when you feel sleepy.

Handling the Kids

Put babies down in their crib while they're still awake so they'll learn to fall asleep on their own. If young kids wake up overnight, make sure they're OK, but then send them right back to bed.

Make Sleep a Priority

If it's time to get in bed and rest, whatever else you're doing can usually wait.