

HOW TO SLEEP WELL

CAN'T SLEEP?



Nothing is more frustrating than not being able to sleep. Tossing and turning. Your mind is racing, going over everything that happened today. Night noises keep you awake. What can you do? There ARE things you can do! Read on and learn some new tricks to sleep well. These tips are also known as "Sleep Hygiene."

SLEEP WHEN SLEEPY

This reduces the time you are awake in bed.

- If you can't fall asleep within 20 minutes (or return to sleep in the middle of the night), get up and do something relaxing or boring, until you feel sleepy. Avoid "trying hard" to sleep, and avoid over-stimulations (TV).

Sit quietly in the dark or read the warranty on your refrigerator. Don't expose yourself to bright lights while you are up. The light gives cues to your brain that it is time to wake up.

AVOID TAKING NAPS DURING THE DAY

This will ensure you are tired at bedtime. If you just can't make it through the day without a nap, limit your nap to 30-45 minutes before 3 pm.

- Get up and go to bed at the same time every day

Even on weekends! When your sleep cycle has a regular rhythm, you will feel better.

REFRAIN FROM STRENUOUS EXERCISE 3 HOURS BEFORE BEDTIME

Regular exercise is recommended to help you sleep well, but the timing of the workout is important. Exercising in the morning or particularly in the afternoon can deepen sleep, but late exercise may interfere with sleep.

(OVER)

DEVELOP SLEEP RITUALS

It is important to give your body cues that it is time to slow down and sleep. Listen to relaxing music, read something soothing for 15 minutes, have a cup of caffeine-free tea, do relaxation exercises. Find a way to stop worrying about "things."

ONLY USE YOUR BED FOR SLEEPING

Refrain from using your bed to watch TV, pay bills, work or read. So when you go to bed your body knows it is time to sleep.

STAY AWAY FROM CAFFEINE, NICOTINE AND ALCOHOL AT LEAST 4-6 HOURS BEFORE BED

Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that interfere with your ability to fall asleep. Coffee, tea, cola, cocoa, chocolate and some prescription and non-prescription drugs contain caffeine. Cigarettes and some drugs contain nicotine. Alcohol may seem to help you sleep in the beginning as it slows brain activity, but you will end up having fragmented sleep.

HAVE A LIGHT SNACK BEFORE BED

If your stomach is too empty, that can interfere with sleep. However, if you eat a heavy meal before bedtime, that can interfere as well. Dairy products, bananas, and turkey contain tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer. Avoid heavy, spicy, or sugary foods 4-6 hours before bedtime -- they can affect your ability to stay asleep.

TAKE A HOT BATH 90 MINUTES BEFORE BEDTIME

A hot bath will raise your body temperature, but it is the *drop* in body temperature that may leave you feeling sleepy. Try taking a hot bath about 60-90 minutes before going to sleep.

MAKE SURE YOUR BED AND ROOM ARE QUIET AND COMFORTABLE

A hot room can be uncomfortable. A cooler room along with enough blankets to stay warm is recommended. If light in the early morning bothers you, get a blackout shade or wear a slumber mask. If noise bothers you, wear ear plugs, or get a "white noise" machine.

USE SUNLIGHT TO SET YOUR BIOLOGICAL CLOCK

As soon as you get up in the morning, go outside and turn your face to the sun for 15 minutes.

SEE A DOCTOR OR GO TO A SLEEP CLINIC IF YOUR PROBLEM PERSISTS!