

Tips for a **GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**

FIVE BASIC STRATEGIES

1. Never Oversleep

Never oversleep because of a poor night's sleep. This is the most crucial rule. Get up at about the same time every day, especially on the morning after you've lost sleep. Sleeping late for just a couple of days can reset your body clock to a different cycle- you'll be getting sleepy later and waking up later.

2. Set your Body Clock

Light helps restart your body clock to its active daytime phase. So when you get up, go outside and get some sunlight. Or if that's difficult, turn on all the lights in your room.

Then walk around for a few minutes. The calves of your legs act as pumps and get blood circulating, carrying more oxygen to your brain to help get you going.

3. Exercise

Keep physically active during the day. This is especially important the day after a bad night's sleep. When you sleep less, you should be more active during the day. Being less active is one of the worst things an insomniac can do.

Strenuous exercise (brisk walking, swimming, jogging, squash, etc.) in late afternoon seems to promote more restful sleep. Also, insomniacs tend to be too inactive a couple of hours before bed. Do some gentle exercise. A stretching routine has helped many people.

4. Limit Naps

A short nap (20-30 minutes) can increase short-term alertness without leaving you feeling groggy or interfering with nighttime sleep.

Limit naps the day after you've lost sleep. When you feel sleepy, get up and do something. Walk, make the bed, or do your errands. Do a gentle stretch to increase the flow of oxygen to your brain and to help you be more alert.

5. Set a Bedtime Schedule

Try to go to bed at about the same time every night. Be regular. Most people get hungry at 7am, noon, and 6pm because they've eaten at those times for years. Going to bed at about the same time every night can make sleep as regular as hunger.

Make the time you spend in bed sleep time. If you are having trouble sleeping, get out of bed and do something relaxing until you are tired. Still have insomnia? Go to bed proportionately later. Then as your time in bed becomes good sleep time, gradually go to bed 15-30 minutes earlier.

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ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

Develop a Bedtime Routine

Stop studying and don't get into any stimulating discussions or activities a half hour or hour before bed. Do something that's relaxing -- read "light" material, play your guitar, listen to music that is quiet, or catch a mindless TV show. Some people sleep better in a clean and neat environment, so they like to straighten and clean their room just before going to bed. Find your own sleep-promoting routine.

Warm Bath - YES ; Shower - NO

Take a long, hot bath before going to bed. This helps relax and soothe your muscles. Showers, on the other hand, tend to wake you up. Insomniacs should avoid showers in the evening.

List "Gotta-Do's"

Keep a pad and pencil handy. If you think of something you want to remember, jot it down. Then let the thought go. There will be no need to lie awake worrying about remembering it.

Stretch and Relaxation

Some people find that a gentle stretching routine for several minutes just before getting into bed helps induce sleep. Others practice relaxation techniques. Libraries or bookstores have books on developing stretching or relaxation routines.

To Eat or Not to Eat

Some sleep centers recommend a light breakfast and lunch to help you stay alert during the day. They advise you to make the evening meal the major meal of the day. Schedule it at least four hours before bedtime so your digestive system will be reasonably quiet by the time you're ready to sleep.

Avoid Caffeine and Tyrosine-rich Foods from Late Afternoon on

Caffeine causes hyperactivity and wakefulness. Some sleep laboratories encourage people to avoid such tyrosine-laden foods as fermented cheeses (cheddar is about the worst; cottage cheese and yogurt are OK), ripe avocados, some imported beers, and fermented meats (bologna, pepperoni, salami). Also avoid red wines, especially chianti.

Cut Down on Alcohol

Alcohol might help you get to sleep, but it results in shallow and disturbed sleep, abnormal dream periods, and frequent early morning awakening.

IS YOUR ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO SLEEP?

Humidity

Most heating systems dry the air in your bedroom. Even a dry throat may make sleeping difficult.

Noise

Some people sleep better with white noise, and for others noise can interrupt sleep. Find what works best for you.

Room Temperature

Sleep in a cool room (60 degrees or so).