



CRITICAL CARE, PULMONARY & SLEEP  
A S S O C I A T E S A PROFESSIONAL LLP

## Proper Sleep Hygiene

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Establish a sleep pattern, the same every day.

- Strictly maintain a regular bedtime and wake up time, for the average person, this should include 8 hours in bed.
- You may require more or less time in bed to feel fully rested during the day. The important thing is to get enough sleep each night.

Reserve the bedroom for bed activities only.

- Do not read, watch TV, listen to the radio or talk on the phone in bed. Do not do homework or office work in bed.
- Many people claim these activities help them go to sleep. If you fall asleep doing these, chances are you'll sleep without them. In fact, doing these activities will actually fracture, or disrupt your sleep as the night progresses- not enough to your awareness, but enough to make you tired the following day.
- Pets are best left off the bed.

Optimize your feelings of safety and security.

- Maintain a minimal light and noise interference.
- Maintain a comfortable room temperature- slightly cool, but not cold. A room humidifier may help.
- Have a firm mattress and two comfortable pillows. If you need more, consult your doctor.

Relax

- Do not wear a watch or have a clock in the bedroom. Clock watching cheats your brain.
- If you must have an alarm, place it in the bathroom or closet and leave the door open. If this is not an option, turn the clock away from you. The important thing is: DO NOT LOOK AT THE TIME DURING/THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.
- If you cannot sleep after about 15-30 minutes (brain time), get up and leave the bedroom.
- Make sure you are exposed to at least 30 minutes of bright light daily. For nightshift workers, 3-4 hours of bright light are recommended nightly.
- Deal with stressful problems immediately after your evening meal, then place them out of your thoughts. This will help you ease into a natural, comfortable sleep. Don't worry when in bed.
- A hot bath 1-3 hours before bedtime (or anytime) may help with relaxation and sleep onset.

## Maintain regular daily activity.

- Do not nap during the day.
- Have a regular bedtime routine to prepare for sleep, such as brushing your teeth, setting the alarm, etc. This will help your body adjust and maintain a healthy, normal night's sleep.

## Exercise

- Exercise will help you lose weight, which improves your sleep.
- Exercising 5-6 hours before bed (in the late afternoon) will help you sleep more soundly. After 6 p.m., exercise will stimulate your nervous system, making your sleep restless.

## Eat healthy, balanced meals at regular times, daily.

- Eat light at night. Avoid heavy foods and sugar, which can lead to indigestion and heartburn.
- After 6 p.m., avoid caffeine, alcohol, smoking (Nicotine is a stimulant), other stimulants (including exercise) and sedatives.
- A snack of carbohydrates, such as milk and/or rice crackers, turkey breast, or low fat mozzarella at bedtime may also help with sleep.

## Do not adjust to new time zones.

- Most trips last less than one week. It takes ten days to adjust your body's clock.
- For trips longer than one week, begin adjusting your schedule accordingly two weeks before departure. Upon arrival, you will be ready for the change.
- While on your trip and preparing to return home, begin re-adjusting your schedule one week before leaving. Within one week upon return, you will be back to normal without noticing the difference.

## Avoid Sleeping Pills

- If you think you need them, then either you are not following proper sleep hygiene or you need to speak with your doctor.

Make sure your bedtime partner strictly adheres to these guidelines as well.