

Sleep Hygiene

- Physically exercise during the day but not right before bed.
- Give yourself permission to sleep.
- Listen to relaxing music (some people are activated by music, white noise may be a better alternative for them).
- Practice relaxation techniques just before bed.
- Avoid watching the television, playing video game, or working on the computer just prior to bedtime. Do not watch television in your bedroom.
- Eliminate caffeine after noon.
- Talk to people who calm you.
- Don't argue prior to going to bed.
- Eat something light.
- Do a boring task.
- Read a boring book.
- Get up at a set time, no matter when you go to sleep. No exceptions.
- Don't nap during the day.
- Sleep in the same place every night.
- Go to bed at a set time (some individuals must wait until they are sleepy, this can work as long as they aren't artificially stimulated by substances or activities).
- Sleep in a cool room. Use a fan if the noise or air movement is helpful.
- Take a hot bath prior to bed.
- Sleep in the dark – light prevents the formation of melatonin. Consider the sources of light and eliminate as many as possible. Most people don't notice the light from their clock or clock-radio and yet this light is sufficient to prevent the formation of melatonin. Turn off, cover, or eliminate as much light as possible. If you often need to go to the bathroom in the night, learn to go without turning on lights.
- If worrying is a problem, schedule a worry time during the day and use that time.
- If you often have a difficult time getting to sleep because your mind is racing, it may prove helpful to journal just before bedtime. You can use journaling to note thoughts or ideas that come to you just prior to bedtime. However, this is not the best time to process through intense emotional experiences or memories
- Use a white noise machine.
- Move alarm clocks and other electrical devices away from your head – at least 3 feet.
- Knit, do hand sewing, or crochet prior to bed.
- Make a list of at least ten things that you hate doing.
 - If you are not asleep within 30 minutes of going to bed, get up and do the first thing on the list. If you wake up and can't fall back asleep within 15 minutes, get up and do one thing on the list.
- Consider separate bedrooms. If your partner or pets are awakening you during the night, consider sleeping in separate beds. It is usually best not to sleep with your pets.
- Avoid alcohol. Alcohol may help you fall asleep but it decreases the quality of sleep, interfering with the deeper levels required for restorative sleep.