

11. SLEEP ROUTINE

Develop a relaxing sleep ritual before bed. A warm bath, a cup of camomile tea, a glass of warm milk, meditation or listening to some calming music may all help.

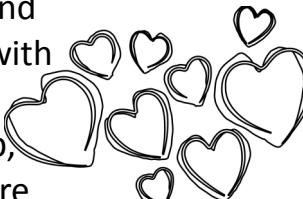


12. AVOID ALCOHOL

You may think alcohol helps you to relax but, despite sleep-inducing effects, your quality of sleep will be poorer and, as your metabolism clears the alcohol from your body, it may cause you to wake up early or frequently. Either way, you won't wake up feeling refreshed!

13. SLEEP AND SEX

Try to preserve your bed as a place for rest and sex only. If you use your bed as an office, study or recreational room, your mind will associate it with these things, rather than sleep, and it will be more difficult to switch off when you need to.



WHY BOTHER?

Sleep hygiene is important for us all, no matter what our age or situation, in order to promote healthy sleep and daytime alertness.

Lack of sleep has a serious impact on our brain's ability to function. One night without sleep and our concentration and attention span are impaired. With further lack of sufficient sleep, the part of the brain that controls language, memory, planning and sense of time begins to shut down. 17 hours of unbroken wakefulness causes a decrease in brain cognition equivalent to a blood alcohol level of 0.05% (two glasses of wine).

Sleep deprivation not only has a major impact on our brain but also on our emotional wellbeing and physical health.

Sweet dreams!

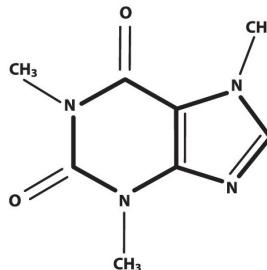


SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS



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1. AVOID CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a stimulant and keeps you awake. Its effects may last for several hours. You might want to reconsider that late night cuppa !

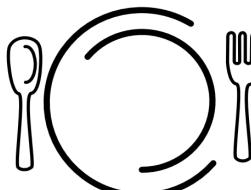


2. AVOID NAPS

Napping throws your body clock off. Staying awake during the day helps you sleep better at night. Any naps longer than 30 minutes will increase your chances of a disturbed night's sleep

3. AVOID HEAVY MEALS BEFORE BED

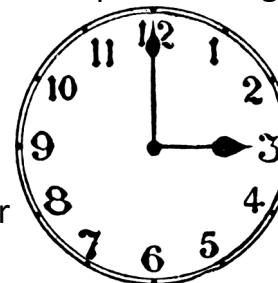
Food can be disruptive before bed so avoid heavy meals before bedtime.



Sugary foods or salty/spicy snacks may also affect your ability to get to sleep.

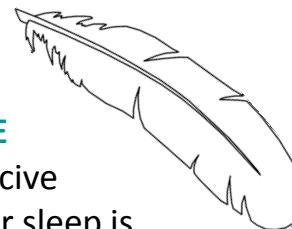
4. DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK

Clock-watching is a vicious cycle. It reinforces negative thoughts about your sleep and you end up increasing your anxiety about getting to sleep, which will only make things worse. Do yourself a favour And hide the clock!



5. SLEEP WHEN SLEEPY

If you really aren't sleepy, don't try to sleep. You will likely spend a long time staring at the ceiling and this will only serve to frustrate or create further anxiety.



6. SLEEP SPACE

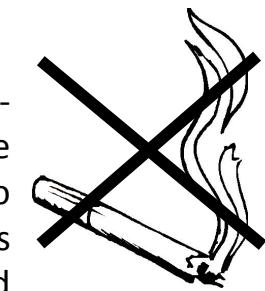
Having a conducive environment for sleep is essential. A comfortable bed, quiet surroundings and ambient room temperature will ensure you drift off to sleep and stay asleep. Ear plugs, and black-out blinds may help.

7. AVOID PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problem-solving in bed may interfere with your ability to get off to sleep. Plan time before bed or the next day to think any problems through.

8. AVOID NICOTINE

Nicotine is a stimulant and can cause difficulty in falling to sleep, awakenings during the night and shallow, unproductive sleep.



9. GET REGULAR EXERCISE

The relationship between sleep and exercise is complex but studies have proven that those who regularly exercise tend to sleep longer, wake less often and feel less tired when they wake up than those who don't. If you have chronic sleep problems, it may take some time for you to feel the benefits but it is worth persevering. Timing your exercise is also important and avoiding strenuous exercise just before bedtime is recommended to ensure that endorphins don't keep you awake.

10. TRY AGAIN

If you find yourself awake after 20-30 minutes of trying to get to sleep, get up, leave your bedroom and try again in a bit. Avoid TV, music or any stimulants during this time.

