



**TIPS FOR A GOOD
NIGHT'S SLEEP**



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Most people at some stage in their lives have problems sleeping - 50 years ago we all averaged 9 hours sleep, and yet today we only average 7! Sleeping problems, which range from not being able to fall asleep, waking up too often or simply getting up feeling cream-cracked, are becoming major problems in today's society.

Sleep is one of the most essential daily processes that our bodies undertake. Not only is it a time to recharge our dwindling life-batteries, it is a time to allow our brain a time to rest and for our immune system to cull and maintain optimal bacteria levels.

If you are struggling to sleep, below are a few ideas that may help break the nasty habit:

1. **Create a natural winding down process before bedtime.** Watching late night TV (or even late night emails) can trick your brain into thinking that the bright light in front of you is daylight and that you should be awake. It may also affect your appetite, as late daylight means summer, which neurologically translates to bodyfat storage time for the winter. So to create a 'natural' transition into slumber try dimming the lights and switching off the TV at least 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime.
2. **Sleep in complete darkness or as close as possible.** Even the smallest bit of light in the room it can disrupt your circadian rhythm and your pineal gland's production of Melatonin and Serotonin. There also should be as little light in the bathroom as possible if you get up in the middle of the night. Please whatever you do, keep the light off when you go to the bathroom at night. As soon as you turn on that light you will for that night immediately cease all production of the important sleep aid melatonin.
3. **Listen to relaxation CDs.** Some people find the sound of white noise or nature sounds, such as the ocean or forest, to be soothing for sleep.
4. **Avoid before-bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars.** This will raise blood sugar and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low (hypo-glycaemia), you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.
5. **Wear socks to bed.** Due to the fact that they have the poorest circulation, the feet often feel cold before the rest of the body. A study has shown that this reduces night wakings.
6. **Read something light.** This will help to relax. Don't read anything stimulating, such as a mystery or suspense novel, as this may have the opposite effect. In addition, if you are really enjoying a suspenseful book, you might wind up unintentionally reading for hours, instead of going to sleep.

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7. **Keep a diary.** If you often lay in bed with your mind racing, it might be helpful keep a diary and write down your thoughts before bed.
8. **Get to bed as early as possible.** Our systems, particularly the adrenals, do a majority of their recharging or recovering during the hours of 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. In addition, your gallbladder dumps toxins during this same period. If you are awake, the toxins back up into the liver, which then secondarily backs up into your entire system and cause further disruption of your health. Prior to the invention of the light bulb, people would have had to go to bed shortly after sundown, as like most animals do, and as nature intended.
9. **Check your bedroom for electro-magnetic fields.** Mobile phones, WiFi and even alarm clocks can produce electro-magnetic fields in the room and subsequently disrupt your production of melatonin and Serotonin, which are essential for a good night's sleep.
10. **Keep the temperature in the bedroom no higher than 70 degrees F.** Many people keep their homes and particularly the upstairs bedrooms far too hot. Maybe even leave a window open to circulate air.
11. **Eat some light protein (white meat, nuts) several hours before bed.** This can provide the L-tryptophan need to produce melatonin and serotonin.
12. **Avoid caffeine.** A recent study showed that in some people, caffeine is not metabolized efficiently and therefore they can feel the effects long after consuming it. So an afternoon cup of coffee (or even tea) will keep some people from falling asleep. Also, some medications, particularly diet pills contain caffeine.
13. **Avoid alcohol.** Although alcohol will make people drowsy, the effect is short lived and people will often wake up several hours later, unable to fall back asleep. Alcohol will also keep you from falling into the deeper stages of sleep, where the body does most of it's healing.
14. **Lose weight.** Being overweight can increase the risk of sleep apnoea, which will prevent a restful nights sleep.
15. **Avoid foods that you may be sensitive to.** This is particularly true for dairy and wheat products, as they may have effect on sleep, such as causing apnoea, excess congestion, gastrointestinal upset, and gas, among others.
16. **Don't drink large amounts of fluids within 2 hours of going to bed.** This will reduce the likelihood of needing to get up and go to the bathroom or at least minimize the frequency.
17. **Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed.** When body temperature is raised in the late evening, it will fall at bedtime, facilitating sleep.

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18. **Keep your bed for sleeping.** If you are used to watching TV or doing work in bed, you may find it harder to relax and to think of the bed as a place to sleep.
19. **Don't change your bedtime.** You should go to bed, and wake up, at the same times each day, even on the weekends. This will help your body to get into a sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep and get up in the morning.
20. **Make certain you are exercising regularly.** Exercising for at least 30 minutes everyday can help you fall asleep. However, don't exercise too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake. Studies show exercising in the morning is the best if you can do it.
21. **Establish a bedtime routine.** This could include meditation, deep breathing, using aromatherapy or essential oils or indulging in a massage from your partner. The key is to find something that makes you feel relaxed, then repeat it each night to help you release the day's tensions.
22. **Go to the bathroom right before bed.** This will reduce the chances that you'll wake up to go in the middle of the night.
23. **Wear an eye mask to block out light.** As said above, it is very important to sleep in as close to complete darkness as possible. That said, it's not always easy to block out every stream of light using curtains, blinds or drapes, particularly if you live in an urban area (or if your spouse has a different schedule than you do). In these cases, an eye mask can help to block out the remaining light.
24. **Put your work away at least one hour (but preferably two or more) before bed.** This will give your mind a chance to unwind so you can go to sleep feeling calm, not hyped up or anxious about tomorrow's deadlines.

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