

Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe healthy sleep habits. These recommendations are based on research and designed to enhance good sleep.

- **Look at your current sleep** (and your habits) by keeping a sleep journal
- **Develop a routine** – go to bed around the same time every night and wake up around the same time every morning (even on your days off), relax before bed to give yourself time to unwind (listen to music, read)
- **Go to bed when you are sleepy** - pay attention to your body, and only try to sleep when you actually feel tired. Try not to miss your “sleepy window.”

- **Avoid things that tend to worsen sleep** – caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate), nicotine, some medications and alcohol (at least 5 hours before bed), late night beverages, large meals
 - Talk to your doctor about medications, and don't make any changes to your medications before talking to your doctor

Facts –

- Caffeine can take 8 hours to get out of your system
- It is common to wake up in the night from nicotine withdrawal
- Alcohol interrupts the quality of your sleep

- **Daytime routines**
 - **Exercise** for at least 30 minutes on most days no later than 3 hours before bedtime
 - **Increase exposure to sunlight** – get outside for at least 30 minutes daily
 - **Naps** – don't take naps after 3pm and limit naps to no more than 20 minutes
 - **Take a hot bath or have a hot (caffeine-free) drink before bedtime**
- **Enhance your environment** –
 - **Bed is for sleep (and sex)** – remove all distractions (noises, bright lights, TV, cell phone, computer)
 - **Use a comfortable pillow and mattress**
 - **Keep your room cool**
 - **Turn down the lights before bedtime**
- **Don't lie in bed awake** – if you are awake for more than 20 minutes in bed and are starting to feel anxious/worried about getting to sleep, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. Consider journaling or making to-do lists. Decide if watching a clock is helpful or harmful.
- **Learn and practice relaxation techniques**

