

Sleep Hygiene

1. Exercise is a good thing but not right before you want to sleep. It's a great way to stay in shape and relieve stress but limit vigorous exercise to before your last meal of the day.
2. Bedtimes are not just for kids! Our body's own natural biological daily rhythm will help us fall asleep and stay asleep if we keep it around the same day, every day.
3. If you are in bed for more than a ½ hour and have not fallen asleep- get out of bed and do something boring but don't read a 'page turner' or watch that movie you have always wanted to watch.
4. A light snack is OK to eat before bedtime but try to avoid eating a heavy meal before sleep.
5. Alcohol to help with sleep should be avoided. Sure, you may fall asleep but it disrupts your sleep architecture and will not result in a restful night's sleep.
6. Try to make the hours before sleep as calm and restful as possible. Avoid physical and emotional over stimulation.
7. Coffee and nicotine are stimulants and should not be used prior to try to fall asleep.
8. Many 'sleep aids' will disrupt sleep architecture and will not result in a restful night's sleep. Many are addicting. Steer clear of them.
9. Have a set routine prior to bed. These repetitive activities will signal to your body that it is time to sleep.
10. Don't use your bed as a desk, or a dining table, or a place to view TV and don't engage in stressful activities in your bed.
11. If you nap during the day, limit naps to 20 minutes.
12. Limit noise exposure; think about using earplugs.
13. Room temperature: follow the Goldilocks rule: not too hot and not too cold
14. Use relaxation recordings, deep breathing, meditation, self-hypnosis
15. There may be some nights when you just don't sleep well. They will come and go. Just accept that and don't catastrophize.
16. Deal with stressful emotions during the day; their resolution will help you sleep at night. Sometimes therapy can be helpful.