



TIPS FOR HEALTHY SLEEP

Your internal clock likes to be on a regular schedule.

- **Sleep times** – Your bedtime and wake-up time should be about the same every day. Try to stay within one hour of this schedule on weekdays and weekends and avoid “sleeping in” on the weekends to catch up on your sleep.
- **Naps** – In young children, naps should be geared to the child’s age and developmental needs. Older children and teens should generally avoid napping because daytime sleep can make it more difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep at night.
- **Exercise** – Weather permitting, try to spend some time outdoors every day and have a daily time for exercise.
- **Warm bath** – This can be helpful shortly before bedtime. The bath should be within 2 hours of going to sleep, last up to 30 minutes, and be warm enough to raise your body temperature without any risk of scalding.

Avoid things that can cause unwanted night-time alertness.

- **Avoid exposure to bright lights at night.**
- **Sunlight** – Spending time outside every day and exposure to sunlight, especially in the morning, help maintain normal sleep-wake cycles. Try to get at least 30 minutes of sunlight starting within 30 minutes of awakening.
- **Sleep times** – Your bedtime and wake-up time should be about the same every day. Try to stay within one hour of this schedule on weekdays and weekends and avoid “sleeping in” on the weekends to catch up on your sleep.

Establish a consistent bedtime routine.

- **Evening activities** - The hour before bed should be a calm and quiet time. Avoid high-energy activities and heavy exercise shortly before bedtime. Instead, try reading a book or talking about the day.
- **Meals** – Avoid heavy meals within an hour or two of bedtime, since this may interfere with sleep. A light snack before bed is acceptable to avoid becoming hungry at night.
- **Electronic media** – Avoid watching television and playing computer or video games before bedtime. These activities are often highly stimulating.
- **Bedroom** – The bedroom should be comfortable, quiet and dark, except for a dim nightlight. Room temperature should be cool (less than 75 degrees). Don’t spend too much time in bed before you plan on going to sleep.
- **Clock** – Keep the clock turned away from you so it’s more difficult to tell the time if you awaken at night.



Minimize use of substances that can cause insomnia.

- **Caffeine** – Caffeine should be avoided for at least 3 to 4 hours before bed. It's best not to drink any after breakfast. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate and many types of soda.
- **Alcohol** – Avoid alcohol. Although it may shorten sleep onset, it disrupts sleep during the night.
- **Smoking** – In addition to other health risks of smoking, nicotine is a stimulant and may also disturb sleep.