

7 lifestyle tips for better sleep

Sleep hygiene is a collective group of habits you can use to improve your sleep.

Follow a regular sleep schedule

Insomnia and poor sleep have been associated with an irregular sleep schedule. Establishing a regular bedtime routine, as well as consistent bedtimes and wake times, can be helpful. A relaxing bedtime routine may include meditation, light stretching, a warm shower or bath, reading a paper book, and autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) stimulation.

Did you know?

ASMR is a sensory experience triggered by auditory or visual stimuli. It is characterized by a calming “tingling” feeling in the neck or scalp areas.

Create an environment conducive to better sleep

Excess noise in the bedroom should be reduced as it may increase nighttime arousals and contribute to insomnia. Engaging in highly demanding activities or using screens (e.g., TV, cellphones, computers) in the bedroom should also be avoided. Purchasing a proper mattress and pillow, maintaining a comfortable temperature (e.g., between 60 and 67 degrees), and

utilizing humidifiers, fans or “white noise” machines, earplugs, and blackout curtains are all techniques that may contribute to a more comfortable and relaxing environment.

Avoid stimulants & other substances that may impair sleep

Consuming caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol, particularly close to bedtime, may contribute to sleep difficulties. The effects of caffeinated beverages, such as black tea, coffee, and soda, may last several hours after intake. Citrus fruit and very heavy, rich, or spicy foods may also contribute to sleep disruption in some individuals prone to digestive issues when consumed close to bedtime. Sleep disturbances may also occur as a side-effect of certain over-the-counter or prescription medications.

Did you know?

The stimulant effects of caffeine kick in quickly and reach their peak within 30 to 60 minutes. You may continue to experience effects of caffeine for the duration it remains in your system, which is approximately three to five hours.

Avoid napping during the day

Daytime naps may result in difficulty falling asleep and fragmented sleep patterns, which may contribute to sleep deprivation and insomnia. If a nap is required, the National Sleep Foundation recommends limiting daytime naps to a maximum of 30 minutes.

Ensure adequate exposure to sunlight

Exposure to natural light and darkness helps to regulate healthy sleep-wake cycles. Additionally, vitamin D deficiency has been associated with sleep disorders and symptoms such as short sleep duration, poor sleep quality, and sleepiness. Allowing natural light in the house and spending time outdoors during the day, even in colder climates, may help reduce the risk of vitamin D deficiency, improve sensitivity to light, and help synchronize the body's circadian rhythms.

Engage in regular physical activity

Regular exercise may help improve sleep in both healthy individuals and those with sleep concerns. Although some sleep recommendations suggest that exercising too close to bedtime may interfere with sleep, research in healthy individuals has found that nighttime exercise did not disrupt sleep.

Incorporate stress management & relaxation techniques

Psychosocial stress has been shown to negatively impact sleep. To minimize exposure to stress, incorporate stress management and relaxation techniques, such as meditation and deep breathing exercises.



References

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