

Sleep Hygiene

Good sleep hygiene is all about putting yourself in the best position to sleep well each and every night.



Optimizing your sleep schedule, pre-bed routine, and daily routines is part of harnessing habits to make quality sleep feel more automatic. At the same time, creating a pleasant bedroom environment can be an invitation to relax and doze off.

A handful of tips can help in each of these areas, they aren't rigid requirements. You can adapt them to fit your circumstances and create your own sleep hygiene checklist to help get the best sleep possible.

Set Your Sleep Schedule

Having a set schedule normalises sleep as an essential part of your day and gets your brain and body accustomed to getting the full amount of sleep that you need.

- **Have a Fixed Wake-Up Time:** Regardless of whether it's a weekday or weekend, try to wake up at the same time. A fluctuating schedule keeps you from getting into a rhythm of consistent sleep.
- **Prioritise Sleep:** It might be tempting to skip sleep in order to work, study, socialize, or exercise, but it's vital to treat sleep as a priority. Calculate a target bedtime based on your fixed wake-up time and do your best to be ready for bed around that time each night.

Follow a Nightly Routine

How you prepare for bed can determine how easily you'll be able to fall asleep. A pre-sleep playbook including some of these tips can put you at ease and make it easier to get to fall asleep when you want to.

- **Keep Your Routine Consistent:** Following the same steps each night, including things like putting on your pyjamas and brushing your teeth, can reinforce in your mind that it's bedtime.
- **Budget 30 Minutes For Winding Down:** Take advantage of whatever puts you in a state of calm such as soft music, light stretching, reading, and/or relaxation exercises.

- **Dim Your Lights:** Try to keep away from bright lights because they can hinder the production of melatonin, a hormone that the body creates to facilitate sleep.
- **Unplug From Electronics:** Build in a 30-60 minute pre-bed buffer time that is device-free. Mobile phones, tablets, and laptops cause mental stimulation that is hard to shut off, they also generate blue light that may decrease melatonin production.
- **Test Methods of Relaxation:** Instead of making falling asleep your goal, it's often easier to focus on relaxation. Meditation, mindfulness, paced breathing, and other relaxation techniques can put you in the right mindset for bed.
- **Don't Toss and Turn:** It helps to have a healthy mental connection between being in bed and actually being asleep. For that reason, if after 20 minutes you haven't gotten to sleep, get up and stretch, read, or do something else calming in low light before trying to fall asleep again.
- **Optimise Your Sleeping Environment:** make sure your mattress and pillow are comfortable and ensure your bedroom is the right temperature. Use blackout blinds/curtains, and ear plugs.

Cultivate Healthy Daily Habits

It's not just bedtime habits that play a part in getting good sleep. Incorporating positive routines during the day can support your circadian rhythm and limit sleep disruptions.

- **Get Daylight Exposure:** Light, especially sunlight, is one of the key drivers of circadian rhythms that can encourage quality sleep.
- **Physically Active:** Regular exercise can make it easier to sleep at night and also delivers a host of other health benefits.
- **Don't Smoke:** Nicotine stimulates the body in ways that disrupt sleep, which helps explain why smoking is correlated with numerous sleeping problems.
- **Reduce Alcohol Consumption:** Alcohol may make it easier to fall asleep, but the effect wears off, disrupting sleep later in the night. As a result, it's best to moderate alcohol consumption and avoid it later in the evening.
- **Cut Down on Caffeine in the Afternoon and Evening:** Because it's a stimulant, caffeine can keep you wired even when you want to rest, so try to avoid it later in the day. Also be aware if you're consuming lots of caffeine to try to make up for lack of sleep.
- **Don't Dine Late:** Eating dinner late, especially if it's a big, heavy, or spicy meal, can mean you're still digesting when it's time for bed. In general, any food or snacks before bed should be on the lighter side.
- **Restrict In-Bed Activity:** To build a link in your mind between sleep and being in bed, it's best to only use your bed only for sleep with sex being the one exception.