

25 Habits That Help You Get a Good Night's Sleep

As you continue to develop good health habits to improve the quality of your sleep, consider adopting good sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene simply refers to the practices that promote continuous and effective sleep.

Another way to look at it is this: Sleep hygiene is simply establishing healthy sleep habits. There are 25 good sleep hygiene habits that will enable most people to fall asleep and stay asleep.

1. The most important sleep hygiene tip is to establish a regular bedtime as well as a regular time of waking up in the morning. Make this a habit, and stick to the schedule on weekends and even during vacations. Do not be haphazard about it, but based on your work schedule, set aside eight hours for sleep and a time to be in bed. For myself, I choose to be in bed between 10:00 and 10:30 p.m.

2. Use your bed only for sleep and sexual relations. Do not use your bed for reading, watching TV, snacking, working or worrying.

3. Avoid naps after 3:00 p.m. When they are taken earlier in the day, make sure they are not longer than 20 to 30 minutes.

4. Exercise before dinner. Exercising too close to bedtime disrupts sleep.

5. Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon and evening.

6. Avoid excessive fluids in the late evening and especially before bedtime.

7. Eat normal portion sizes of a well-balanced meal at dinnertime approximately three to four hours before bedtime as

well as a light bedtime snack. Do not go to bed hungry, and do not eat a large meal prior to bedtime.

8. Take a warm bath one to two hours before bedtime, and consider adding lavender oil if desired in order to help you relax.

9. Keep the bedroom cool and well ventilated.

10. Purchase a comfortable mattress, pillow and linens. (Check out a 3-inch Tempur-Pedic pad to put on top of your mattress.) Remember, you spend roughly one-third of your life in bed; therefore, your bed should be your most important piece of furniture.

11. Thirty minutes before going to bed, start to wind down by listening to soothing music, reading the Bible or another good book, having a massage or being intimate with your spouse.

12. Put dimmer switches on your lights, and dim them a few hours prior to bedtime.

13. After you lie down to go to sleep, if you are not asleep in 20 minutes, simply get up, go into another room, and read and relax in dim light until you feel sleepy. Then return to bed.

14. If your spouse awakens you with snoring or unusual movements, simply move to the guest bedroom.

15. Try to wake up at the same time each day.

16. Try exchanging foot, neck and shoulder, back or scalp massages with your spouse, and purchase an inexpensive handheld massager from Brookstone.

17. Relax your mind and body before bedtime by gentle stretching, relaxation exercises or using an aromatherapy candle or oil.

18. Clean clutter out of the bedroom, and remove computers, fax machines, paperwork and anything that reminds you of work.
19. Make sure your bedroom is completely dark. Remove all nightlights and cover your alarm clock and phone light with a hand towel. Put black electrical tape or sticky notepads over tiny lights on your alarm system, TV, DVD, satellite, stereo or any other lights that are visible. Consider purchasing blackout curtains.
20. Block out noise by using earplugs, doublepaning your windows, or using heavy drapes. I personally use a sound generator I purchased from Brookstone that plays white noise. Or you can simply use a fan.
21. Try a lullaby CD or a CD that has sounds of nature.
22. Keep pets out of your bedroom. Pets may snore, pounce on you, growl, howl, bark or whine. They can also trigger allergies in many patients.
23. Avoid watching heart-pounding movies, ball games or late-night news. Instead watch something funny or lighthearted before bedtime, but it's best not to watch TV in the bedroom.
24. When lying in bed, you and your spouse may try telling or reading funny jokes to one another. Couples who laugh together and pray together generally stay together.
25. Meditate on Scripture, and do not let your mind worry or wander. I meditate on the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13. I also meditate on Psalm 91, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and Ephesians 6:10-18. You need to memorize these Scriptures and meditate on them over and over.

This article was excerpted from The Ultimate Sleep Guide: 21 Days to the Best Night of Your Life (Siloam, Charisma House, 2015), by Don Colbert, M.D. The book can be purchased [here](#).

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