

Getting More ZZZs

Diet Strategies

Many foods and eating habits can affect sleep patterns. For some, a few simple diet changes can help improve sleep.

Examples:

Tomato products and spicy foods can cause **heartburn**, which may get worse when you lie down to sleep.

Drinking too much of any liquid close to bedtime may cause you to wake up to urinate during the night.

Eating a heavy meal in the evening can make sleeping difficult. Opt for several small, lighter meals throughout the day.

Skip the caffeine and alcohol, especially close to bedtime. Research has shown that regular caffeine drinkers have trouble both falling asleep at night and waking up in the morning. Try drinking water, herbal teas, or low-fat or fat-free milk instead.

Exercise Strategies

If you don't exercise regularly, you can add better sleep to the list of reasons why you should. Research shows that people who exercise in the afternoon get deeper, restorative sleep that night. Also, compared to nonexercisers, people who exercise regularly take less time to fall asleep. **Ideas:**

Skip your afternoon coffee break and take a 15-minute walk instead.

Add exercise to your day by taking the stairs whenever possible, parking farther away from your destination, or walking or doing vigorous housework for 30 minutes.

Consider combining aerobic activity with weight or resistance training. Varying your routine makes you more likely to stick with it.

Note: Get your health care provider's OK before you significantly raise your exercise level.



More Tips to Sleep On

Don't go to bed worried. Resolve to find a solution after you have rested.

Stay cool while you sleep. Your body's core temperature drops during sleep, and although researchers disagree on the optimal sleeping temperature, it seems that most people sleep best in a slightly cool room. **Your best bet:** Sleep in light, comfortable clothing and layer the covers so you can remove some if you get too warm.

Reduce noise. If your bedroom gets street noise or you're sleeping at a time when the rest of the household and neighborhood are awake, try earplugs.

Let the sunshine in. Get as much natural light as possible during the day. It triggers a pattern in your body that regulates sleep and wake times. Conversely, make sure the room you sleep in is as dark as possible. Consider light-blocking shades or a sleep mask.

Don't watch the clock. If you find yourself rolling over to check the time every hour, covering your clock may help you sleep better.

For tossing and turning. If you stir and find yourself unable to fall back asleep, get up. Quiet your mind with a few minutes of light reading or listening to soothing music.

Avoid excessive napping. Sleeplessness at night might make you want to nap during the day. But nap too long and you may not sleep well later on. Limit naps to 15-20 minutes — that much time should give you a boost without leaving you groggy.

Final thought: Sleep is essential to living. To feel better now and protect long-term health, don't shortchange yourself on slumber.



SLEEP WELL

HOW TO WAKE UP
REFRESHED AND
REJUVENATED



YOU NEED GOOD SLEEP

People spend about one-third of their lives sleeping. Deep, restorative sleep promotes good health and well-being. Yet most people don't get enough shut-eye. Chances are you've experienced your share of sleepless nights. When you're lying awake staring at the ceiling, you may feel as though getting to sleep is beyond your control. But there's plenty you can do to ease your way into dreamland when you're having trouble.

Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

Sleep deprivation can cause fatigue, depression and accidents. To prevent these problems, the National Sleep Foundation says adults need an average of 7-8 hours of sleep daily.

If you usually wake up refreshed and alert, you're probably getting enough sleep. But if you routinely feel tired and irritable or you struggle to concentrate, you may need more or better sleep. **Check off the sleep patterns you experience!**

- I have trouble falling asleep.
- I have too much on my mind to fall asleep or go back to sleep.
- I need more than 30 minutes to fall asleep.
- I can't go back to sleep when I wake during my normal bedtime.
- I wake up too early.
- I feel tired upon waking, despite apparently normal sleep.
- I awaken frequently during sleep time.
- I have uncontrolled episodes of falling asleep during the day.

If you experience two or more of these situations on a regular basis, you may have developed a problematic sleep pattern — one that may be interfering with your health and safety. Read on for some sleep-friendly tips that can help you get more shut-eye.



5 Keys to Sleeping Well

1. **Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol**, especially close to bedtime.
2. **Exercise regularly**, but not within 3-4 hours before bedtime.
3. **Practice mind/body relaxation** or other calming activities, such as light reading, listening to soothing music or soaking in a warm bath, close to bedtime.
4. **Avoid eating or drinking near bedtime**, although if you're really hungry, have a small snack (such as toast) before going to bed.
5. **Go to sleep and get up at roughly the same times every day**, even on days off.

WHY SLEEPING WELL IS SO IMPORTANT

People lose sleep for many reasons — work or family demands, socializing or pursuing other interests. But cutting back on sleep may be as harmful to your health as poor nutrition or lack of exercise. Sleep deprivation over time can lead to a weaker immune system, depression and difficulty concentrating. It can also slow your metabolism, which makes you more prone to weight gain and may make you look older before your time. Get professional help for continued sleep problems.



Did You Know? If you feel very sleepy or exhausted, despite apparently sound sleep, it could be sleep apnea — the temporary and repeated cessation of breathing, often accompanied by loud snoring. Sleep apnea can result in physical and mental fatigue, irritability, headaches and cardiovascular risks. If apnea continues, see your health care provider about corrective measures. **Self-care starters for sleep apnea:** Lose excess weight. Avoid alcohol and tranquilizers, and don't sleep on your back. If you smoke, quit.

What Is Insomnia?

You have insomnia if you are unable to sleep well enough to function normally. The most common cause involves psychological issues — stress, worry or depression. Any medical condition that causes discomfort, such as arthritis, allergies, heartburn or hot flashes, can disrupt sleep. So can sleep environment. Whether you have short-term or long-term insomnia, try keeping a sleep journal for 2-3 weeks.

Each day make an entry for:

SLEEP JOURNAL	
Time I retired:	
Time it took to fall asleep:	
Amount of time I slept:	
Number of times I woke up:	
How soundly I slept (on a scale of 1-5):	
Activities and feelings prior to retiring:	
How I felt upon rising:	
Other related factors like snoring, dreams, diet or medications:	

Later, record your energy level and how you felt during the day. Once you identify the amount of sleep that's best for you, it's essential to establish a routine for going to sleep.

Then adopt good habits such as the 5 Keys to Sleeping Well described in this brochure.