

TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

1. Do get up at the same time every morning, every day of the week, regardless of what time you went to bed, when you fell asleep, how many awakenings you experienced, or how much sleep you may have gotten. When you get up at the same time each morning you accomplish two things. First, the body's daily rhythm is set, so it can expect to get up the same time tomorrow, and two, all other sleep and wake cycles are synchronized.
2. Do set aside a special time to collect your thoughts, mull over the day's events, plan for the future, and work out unsolved problems before going to bed.
3. Do relax in the evening before bedtime by using whatever happens to relax you, whether reading a book, watching television (no violent or distressing programs), or working on a hobby. Allow time to 'cool down', unwind, and relax.
4. Do have a regular routine of preparing for bed, such as brushing your teeth, washing your face, setting the alarm, and so on. Prepare your sleeping environment. Prepare your bedroom to provide maximum comfort and a minimum of distraction. Evaluate old needs and habits such as night lights.
5. Do eat a light snack in the evening if you feel hungry, perhaps with a glass of warm milk.
6. Do determine your optimal amount of sleep. Systematically work toward obtaining the right amount of sleep each night. That is the amount that lets you feel good during the following day.
7. Don't drink caffeine-containing beverages (coffee, tea, soft drinks) or alcohol within 2-3 hours of bedtime.
8. Don't eat heavy or spicy food or drink large quantities of liquids in the evenings.
9. Don't use your bedroom for studying, crocheting, watching television, eating snacks, or engaging in other activities. The bedroom should be reserved for sleeping and sexual activity, so that you associate it with only pleasurable feelings.
10. Don't nap during the day. If you feel sleepy, stop working and take some time to relax, breathe some fresh air and get your 'second wind'. For most people a nap during the day will decrease the quality and quantity of sleep at night.
11. Don't lie awake in bed for long periods of time. If you can't fall asleep in 30 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing before trying to fall asleep again.
12. Don't take sleeping pills as part of your regular sleep routine. Sleeping pills have not been shown to be effective for more than four weeks of nightly use.