

Healthy Habits For Good Sleep

It's normal to experience an occasional sleepless night, but here are some quick and easy remedies to help you get to sleep:

- Wear comfortable, loose sleepwear that does not twist and bind.
- Go to sleep only when sleepy!
- Use your bed for sleep and sex only! Don't study, watch TV, or talk on the phone in bed. This way you will associate getting into bed with going to sleep.
- Avoid napping, as it will interfere with your sleep cycles at night.
- Get regular exercise earlier in the day; it reduces stress and triggers a deep, relaxing sleep. Do not exercise within 4 hours of going to sleep, as it promotes wakefulness.
- Have a light snack or drink before bed (e.g., warm milk or herbal tea) but stay away from sugar and caffeine (especially after noon!).
- Get up and go to bed the same times every day - even on weekends! DON'T compensate for lost sleep by going to bed too early.
- Create sleep rituals like listening to music, reading, or doing relaxation exercises to wind down and cue your body to get sleepy.
- Stay away from caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol at least 4-6 hours before bed. Alcohol may seem to help you sleep but it actually causes a fragmented, less restful sleep. You should also avoid nicotine and taking drugs to fall asleep.
- Use sunlight to set your biological clock - 15 minutes of sun a day will help maintain your wakefulness / sleepiness cycle.
- Stay calm if you can't sleep. Stressing over insomnia may keep you up.
- Leave your bedroom after lying awake for 20 minutes and don't lie in bed too long, frustrated and tense.



HEALTHY THOUGHTS FOR GOOD SLEEP

On Sleep Loss

Negative: "I must get 8 hours of sleep or I can't function."

Positive: "Five and a half hours of sleep is enough for core sleep."

Negative: "If I don't sleep at all I won't be able to function/I'll get sick."

Positive: "My performance and health will be fine even if I don't sleep tonight."

Negative: "I must get to bed tonight because I have a (test/interview/early appointment) tomorrow."

Positive: "I'll do fine on the (test/interview/appointment) even if I don't sleep."

On Forcing Sleep

Negative: "I must sleep. I have to try harder."

Positive #1: "I can't control when I fall asleep."

#2: "Maybe I won't fall asleep. It'll be okay."

On Catastrophic Thinking

Negative #1: "What's wrong with me that I can't sleep?"

#2: "This is awful!"

#3: "I hate to go to bed!"

Positive: #1: "I'm already getting more sleep than I realize."

#2: "There's nothing awful about this. Everyone gets insomnia sometimes. I'll be okay."

#3: "I need less sleep than I thought."

On Impatience

Negative: "I have to get over this problem right away."

Positive: "I will experiment with different steps and try to make progress."

