
Sleep Hygiene Handout

It is well established that lack of sleep will affect a person's mental process, memory, and problem solving skills. It has detrimental effects on a person's day to day function as well. The person will get irritated, excessively tired, and will have no energy or motivation to function normally.

Though the reasons for insomnia could be attributed to a person's anxieties, worries, medical conditions, life style, etc. in many cases it is found that people could improve their sleep by making some simple adjustments (fine tuning) and some compromises with their on-going life style. The following sleep hygiene tips are proved to be highly effective. However, if you have specific anxiety issues you will have to seek individual therapy as well.

1. Fix your biological (sleep) clock: Maintain a regular bedtime and wake-up time including weekends. It is important to get up about the same time every day, regardless of what time you went to bed.
2. Create a Routine: Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine. Relaxing rituals prior to bedtime may include a warm bath or shower, aroma therapy, light reading, or listening to soothing music. Watching TV is not recommended. A glass of hot milk is good before bed time. Hot chocolate is not a good idea.
3. Let the environment ask you to sleep: Your bedroom should be dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool. Use comfortable mattress and pillows.
4. No work; only SLEEEEP: Use your bedroom only for sleep. Have work materials, computers, and TVs in another room.
5. Mind your belly: Finish eating at least 2-3 hours prior to your bedtime. (Some food that could help your sleep include: Milk, Cheese, Curd, Potato, Wheat, Seafood, Beans, Sesame seeds, Oatmeal, Apricots, and Bananas).
6. Important: Avoid caffeine within 6 hours; alcohol and smoking within 2 hours of bedtime.
7. Let your body feel tired: Exercise regularly. Finish your exercise a few hours before bedtime so that your body won't be up and energetic at bed time.
8. More Important: Avoid naps during day time. Naps will disturb your sleep clock. You only need 8 to 9 hours sleep as a normal adult and this should be done at night.
9. Go to bed only when you feel sleepy: Lay in bed only for sleeping, not for work or watching TV. If you are not able to sleep after 10-15 minutes, get up and go to another room to read or listen to music until you feel sleepy.
10. Park your anxieties well in advance: Designate time to write down problems and possible solutions in the late afternoon or early evening, not close to bedtime. Bed time should be completely dedicated for sleep - this is not a time to deal with your problems!



HOW MANY HOURS OF SLEEP?

See table below:

Age	Hours
Newborn	upto 18 hours
1 - 12 months	14 to 18
1 - 3 years	12 to 15
3 - 5 years	11 to 13
5 - 12 years	9 to 11
Teenagers	9 to 10
Adults + elderly	7.5 to 9
Pregnant women	Minimum 8 hours

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