



TEN TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP

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- 1. Set a Routine.** Try to go to bed and wake up at about the same time each day. Also, try to go through a familiar routine before bed each night (shower, lay your clothes out, read a book to the kids, etc.). Setting a routine will send a message to your brain that you are preparing for rest.
- 2. Take a Warm Shower or Bath.** This can help relax your body and get you ready to rest.
- 3. Eat a Small Snack.** This will keep you from waking up hungry, but remember keep it SMALL and keep it HEALTHY.
- 4. Exercise Daily.** This will help you get to sleep more easily and stay asleep longer. Don't exercise in the evening though... this might make you too alert to sleep.
- 5. Go Decaf!!!** Even one caffeinated drink early in the day can cause sleep disturbances. If you are so used to your caffeine that you get headaches or feel sluggish without it, start by mixing half decaf and half regular. Each day add more and more decaf until you are caffeine free!
- 6. Avoid Alcohol.** Although alcohol can help you get to sleep it will cause a restless sleep, often with early waking.
- 7. Avoid Tobacco Use.** Nicotine is a stimulant. This means that tobacco is a medication designed to keep you awake. Quitting this habit has many health benefits in addition to improving your sleep.
- 8. Create a Comfortable Sleep Environment**
 - Cool.** Keep your room cool.
 - Dark.** Keep your room dark by using a window blind or eye mask.
 - Quiet.** Keep your room quiet. Consider earplugs or white noise (no need to spend a lot on a fancy noisemaker... try a fan).
- 9. Create a location for sleep.** Reserve your bed for sleeping and intimate relations. Read, watch TV, and do other activities outside of your bedroom. This routine lets your mind prepare for sleep as soon as you get into bed.
- 10. Don't Just Lay There.** It's frustrating to watch the clock wishing you could fall asleep. The more frustrated you get, the less likely you are to fall sleep. If you have been awake for 30 minutes, get up and go to another room and do something relaxing for 20 - 30 minutes. Try listening to soft music, reading a magazine, prayer, or watching Nick-at-Nite reruns. Avoid more stimulating activities like catching up on laundry, household chores, or watching a murder mystery on TV.

Please let us know if you continue to have problems sleeping after making the suggested changes. Excessive daytime sleepiness, morning headaches, excessive snoring, chronic generalized body aches, and falling asleep at inappropriate times are a few symptoms that may be caused by sleep disorders. If your sleep does not improve, further testing may be required.