

Rules of Sleep Hygiene

Proper sleep hygiene has 4 components:

1. Behavior
2. Environment
3. Diet
4. Exercise

Behavior

- **Have a regular schedule**
Go to bed and wake-up at the same times, regardless of the day of the week.
- **Have a relaxing pre-sleep routine**
Engage in a routine prior to sleep in order to prep the mind/body for sleep.
- **Ensure bedroom only used for sleep or intimacy**
Only go to bed when drowsy. Do not eat, watch TV, or read in bed.
- **Limit the time you spend awake in bed**
If you are awake in bed for 15-20 minutes, get up and leave the bedroom. Engage in quiet activity until drowsy.
- **Avoid naps**
Only nap if necessary to retain alertness (30 minutes maximum). Avoid napping 6-8 hours prior to sleep.

Environment

- **Have a dark bedroom**
Avoid bright lights, because bright lights can disrupt sleep.
- **Set cool temperature (or comfortable temperature)**
Uncomfortably warm bedrooms disrupt sleep.
- **Avoid/minimize loud noises**
Use ear plugs or “white noise” machines to minimize loud noises.
- **Have a bedroom free of potential allergens**
Allergens can disrupt sleep because of sneezing, sniffing, and coughing.

Diet

- **Avoid caffeine 6-8 hours before sleep**
Chocolate, some teas, coffee contain caffeine. Reasonable daily amount of caffeine is 1-2 cups of coffee.
- **Avoid alcohol 3-5 hours before sleep**
Alcohol may help sleep onset, but sleep will be fragmented and poor quality.
- **Avoid nicotine prior to sleep**
Withdrawal symptoms can disrupt sleep.
- **Eat a light carbohydrate snack prior to sleep**
Hunger can disrupt sleep. Avoid large meals prior to sleep. Avoid sugars and caffeine.

Exercise

- **Exercise regularly**
Regular exercise promotes a regular sleep/wake schedule. The body likes a routine.
- **Avoid strenuous exercise 3-5 hours before sleep**
Exercise raises body temperature. During sleep body temperature lowers, and increased body temperature confuses the mind/body of the regular sleep/wake schedule.