Sweet Dreams

How to Get a Better Night’s Sleep

Creating good bedtime rituals or “sleep hygiene” as the professionals call it, is important for feeling refreshed and energized the next day. Getting a good nights’ sleep improves attention span and focus, working memory, long-term memory, decision making, and athletic performance. Following are some tips to help you get the best rest possible.

Invest in a comfortable mattress.

Try to go to sleep at the same time every night.

Get up at the same time every morning (no more than an hour difference on the weekend).

Put up blackout blinds, shades or curtains.

Limit caffeine in the afternoon and evening.

Limit alcohol before bedtime.

Try to quit tobacco use (nicotine is a stimulant).

Don’t use computers, cell phones or handheld devices in the 90 minutes before bedtime. LED lighting “tells” the brain to stay awake.

Limit television viewing before bed (it tends to excite rather than relax).

Lower the temperature in the house. The body likes a cooler temperature during sleep.

If you suspect you might suffer from sleep apnea, visit your doctor to get evaluated.

Only use the bed for sleeping, lovemaking or reading before sleep.

Don’t eat too late. Eat dinner 3-4 hours before bed. Night time snacking makes the body think it is gearing up for another 4 hours of activities.

Meditate, pray, take a bubble bath, drink herbal tea or listen to soothing music before bed. Creating bedtime rituals help signal the body that it is time to rest.

Only take 15-20 minute naps in the afternoon if necessary.

Shoot for getting 7-9 uninterrupted hours of sleep per night (National Sleep Foundation)

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