

SLEEP HYGIENE

What is Sleep Hygiene?

The term sleep hygiene refers to healthy sleep habits. Having good sleep hygiene can effectively help improve quality and quantity of sleep.



Sleep Hygiene Tips

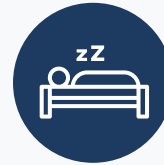
When to go to bed? Only when you are falling asleep

You should only go to bed when you are feeling like you are dozing off and about to fall asleep. Otherwise, spending too much time awake in bed can impact our sleep because it confuses our brain to thinking that our bed is a place to predominantly be awake in!



Bed = only for sleep!

You should only sit or lay down on your bed if you are planning to sleep. That means that you should avoid: studying, scrolling on your phone, watching tv on your bed, etc.



Food

Your eating habits can play a major role in the quality of our sleep. For example, if you are too hungry before going to bed, you might not be able to fall asleep (we recommend eating a light snack, such as an apple, and then trying to sleep again). Or, having a very heavy meal can make it difficult to fall asleep or effect the general sleep quality.



Exercise

Any form of exercise (walking, yoga, swimming, gym, etc.) can have a positive effect on helping you fall asleep faster. At times, it can also help improve overall sleep quality.





Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and sleep

Caffeine, alcohol and nicotine can have a tremendously negative effect on your sleep, even if you don't realize it! It is best to avoid consuming caffeine and alcohol 10-12 hours before going to bed. With nicotine, it is recommended to avoid consuming it 4-6 hours minimum before going to bed.

Clock-watching

We've all done it before, checking the watch every half an hour to see how much time we have left until we have to wake up. The following behavior actually impedes our sleep and makes it more difficult to stay asleep! If you can't fall asleep, we recommend shifting your perspective to the idea that even if you can't fall asleep, at least you are relaxing. The following mindset will actually help you fall asleep faster and reduce any sleep anxiety.

Naps

Although some people may feel like they need to nap throughout the day, naps are very detrimental for our sleep-health. If you are a person that needs to nap throughout the day, we recommend that the nap does not exceed half an hour. The recommended amount for naps is 10-15 minutes. We also recommend avoid sleeping after 2-3 pm. Otherwise, anything above half an hour can lead to a sense of grogginess and negatively impact night-time sleep.



Bath-time

Having a warm bath/shower before going to bed can help relax the mind and body, which can help you fall asleep faster.



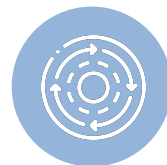
Sleep-environment

Having the right space for your sleep environment can improve your sleep quality. We recommend dimming the lights an hour or two before going to bed. Additionally, clearing up any clutter in your sleep space is recommended. Once you are ready to sleep, the optimal environment is a dark room with a room temperature between 16-20 degrees Celsius.



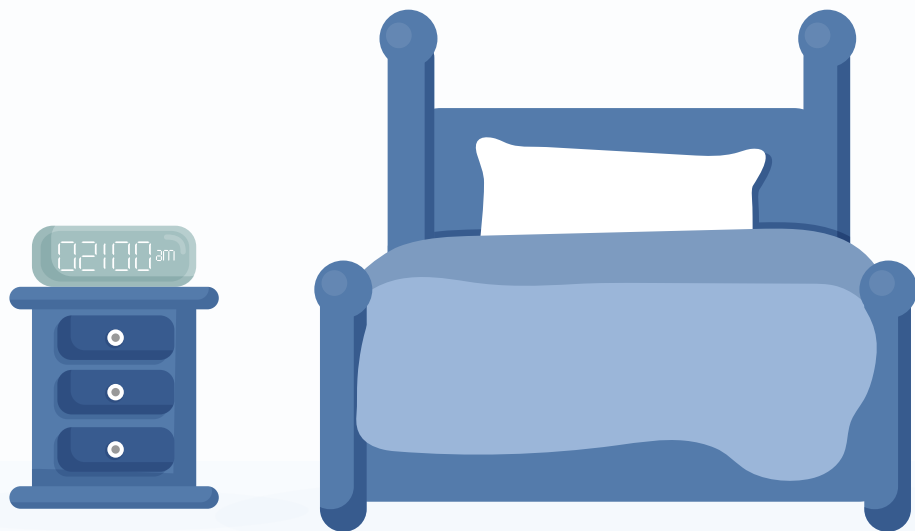
No phone rule

Studies have shown that the blue-light from electronic screens, such as phones, can have a negative impact on your sleep. The reason is because it decreases the natural melatonin levels your body creates. We recommend keeping away from any electronics (yes, that includes Netflix!) half an hour to an hour before going to bed.



Consistency

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, including weekdays and weekends, can lead to improved sleep. The reason this happens is because your mind gets reinforced to feeling sleepy at a certain time in the night and waking up naturally during the day. For example, sleeping at 10 pm every night and waking up at 7 am every day.



What to do when you can't fall asleep

Rule of thumb: if it takes you more than 20+ minutes to fall asleep, you should actually leave bed and sit somewhere else and do something relaxing (such as reading, or even staring at the wall!). If a person who cannot fall asleep quickly stays in bed, the message it sends to the mind is that your bed is a place to stay awake in! Leaving your bed and only returning once you're falling asleep will help you fall asleep and stay asleep faster. Repeat the following steps until you finally fall asleep.

Sleep Routine

Having a sleep routine before going to bed can improve your quality of sleep. A sleep routine can be implemented ten minutes to an hour before bed. The idea of a sleep routine is to relax the mind and unwind from the day, especially if it was a busy one! A sleep routine can include the following examples: not using your phone, dimming the lights, reading a book, drinking non-caffeinated drink (such as chamomile tea), taking a hot bath or practicing yoga. The sleep routine you decide on should be what suits you best (it can include only one activity – such as reading).

