

Different people require different amounts of sleep. The vast majority of us need between seven and nine hours of sleep each night. You should sleep uninterrupted. When you wake up, you should feel well-rested and ready to go. Most importantly, you should generally have no sleepiness during the day, even when involved in boring or mundane activities.

1. **Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule.** The body adapts to falling asleep at a certain time, but only if this is relatively fixed. Making slight variations in sleep and wake times to adjust to a more suitable schedule for lifestyle demands may make a difference in your overall sleep hygiene.
2. **Establish a pre-sleep ritual.** Pre-sleep rituals, such as a warm bath, shower, or a few minutes of reading, can help you fall asleep easier. Avoid exposure to bright light before bedtime.
3. **Create a sleep-conducive environment.** You should sleep in a room that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool. Consider using blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, or 'white noise' such as a fan.
4. **Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex.** It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment.
5. **Avoid napping during the day.** Napping may cause you to stay awake later at night. If you do nap, limit your nap to 25 minutes.
6. **Try a light snack before bed.** Warm milk and foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, such as bananas, may help you to sleep. Avoid a heavy meal within a few hours of bedtime.
7. **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise, particularly in the afternoon, can help deepen sleep. Avoid strenuous exercise within the 2 hours before bedtime.
8. **Avoid caffeine close to bedtime.** Caffeine is a stimulant, which means it can produce an alerting effect. Caffeine products, such as coffee, tea, colas and chocolate, remain in the body on average from 3 to 5 hours.
9. **Avoid alcohol close to bedtime.** Although alcohol may make you sleepy, it can disrupt your sleep once metabolized. Consuming alcohol leads to a night of less restful sleep.
10. **Set aside time for problem solving.** Try problem solving and leave any stressful activities to earlier in the day so you don't carry anxious thoughts to bed. Try writing down your worries in a 'worry book', then set it aside well before bedtime.



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