

Improving Your Healthy Sleeping Habits

Objective

To improve your healthy sleeping habits to feel better physically and emotionally.

You Should Know

When you have a bad night's sleep, it can negatively impact your body and brain. Your energy level, memory, and ability to focus and concentrate can all be affected. Lack of sleep may make it harder to control your emotions and urges or make productive decisions. It can even worsen feelings of depression, and negatively affect your immune system.

The average adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep each night. When you are experiencing worry, fear, stress, and other intense emotions, that target can seem impossible.

How does your lack of sleep affect how you feel physically and emotionally?

What You Should Do

Name: _____ Date: _____

Note: If you have sleeping problems three or more times a week for at least three months, you may want to ask your doctor about medications, herbs, or supplements that might be helpful. Additionally, if you wake up multiple times a night or wake yourself up gasping for breath, these may be signs of a sleep disorder. Discuss your symptoms with your doctor.

Here are some strategies that can help you feel more physically and emotionally relaxed at bedtime and improve your healthy sleeping habits.

- Listen to soft music, read, or take a warm shower before bed.
- Avoid using your phone, tablet, TV, or other electronic devices in bed. Shut your phone off at bedtime to avoid waking up from notification pings.
- Exercise regularly, but not right before bed.
- Create a to-do list for the following day to clear your head.
- Process your thoughts in a journal, sketchbook, or notebook.
- Practice deep breathing, meditation, or prayer before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine in the evening.
- Keep your bedroom at a cool temperature (65-68 degrees).

- If you are sensitive to light and sound while sleeping, wear earplugs and a sleep mask. A white noise machine may also help; if you use a white noise app on your phone, remember to turn off your notifications.
- If you have trouble falling asleep or falling back to sleep, get out of bed and do some soothing activity (like reading or listening to classical music) in another room. Return to bed when you feel drowsy.
- Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Avoid eating heavy meals at least two to three hours before bed.
- Make sure your mattress and pillows are comfortable.
- If you take a nap during the day, limit it to 15-20 minutes.
- Write down your own ideas here:

Which of the suggested strategies are you most likely to try?

What steps do you need to take, or supplies will you need to get, to make them happen?

Next, keep track of your sleeping habits using the chart below. Indicate when you have trouble sleeping, the strategy you used to fall asleep or get back to sleep, and whether not it worked. Then, describe how you felt the next day. Track your progress for at least two weeks, making copies of the chart as necessary.

Date	Hours Slept	Strategy Used to Fall Asleep/Return to Sleep	Successful? (Y/N)	How You Felt Next Day <i>(groggy, alert, cranky)</i>

Reflections on This Exercise

Did you experience any changes after taking steps to improve your healthy sleeping habits? Explain.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
 (1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
