

SUCCESSFUL SLEEP HABITS

1. Use your bed only for sleeping.

Avoid watching TV, talking on the phone, using your computer, eating, and doing other things that require you to be awake. By limiting your in-bed activities to sleep, you can train yourself to expect to sleep when you are in bed.

2. Get out of bed if you cannot sleep.

Staying in bed when you are not able to sleep can make you frustrated which then makes it harder to fall asleep. If it is taking longer than 20-30 minutes it is better to leave your room and find something boring to do until you start to feel like you could fall asleep easily.

3. Get on a sleep schedule.

Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. It's generally best to get up at your standard time in the morning even if it was hard to fall asleep the night before. Avoid going to bed much earlier than your normal bedtime. Over time these habits will help to stabilize your sleep schedule.

4. Avoid naps.

As much as possible, avoid taking naps. Naps tend to interfere with your ability to sleep well at night.

5. Avoid stimulants.

Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening. Alcohol also tends to decrease the quality of sleep even if it is easier to fall asleep initially. Be careful of electronic usage close to bedtime as the content and light can stimulate your brain to stay awake.

6. Avoid "clock watching".

Watching the clock when trying to sleep will only increase your worrying about sleep. Some people find it helpful to set their alarm and put it under their bed. This includes your phone.

7. Eliminate disruptions.

Eliminate any possible factors that might disrupt your sleep including fluid intake close to bedtime, indigestion, hunger, pets, etc.

8. Don't Panic!!!

If you are struggling to sleep, don't panic. Most of us tend to "catastrophize" late at night telling ourselves things like "I have to sleep! I'll be worthless tomorrow. I'm going to be so tired!". In reality most of these fears are exaggerated and only increase our anxiety about getting enough sleep.

These guidelines are adapted from the National Sleep Foundation recommendations and the sources referenced here:
Edinger, J. C. (2015). *Overcoming insomnia: A cognitive--behavioral therapy approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Irish, L. K. (2014). The role of sleep hygiene in promoting public health: A review of empirical evidence. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, 23-36.