

7 SLEEP RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some suggestions to improve your sleep. Consistency in the application of these rules is important.

1. Reserve at least 1 hour before going to bed to relax.
For example:
 - Watching TV (low stimulation / boring TV show)
 - Listening to relaxing music
 - Reading
 2. Go to bed when feeling sleepy only (e.g., red eyes and / or heavy eye lids, yawning).
 3. Get out of bed when unable to fall asleep or to go back to sleep within 20-30 minutes. Engage in a relaxing or calming activity in another room / space. Go back to bed when feeling sleepy only.
- Repeat steps 2 and 3 as often as needed. By being constant, you will regain sleep faster.
4. Get up at the same time every morning, no matter what the number of hours of sleep obtained (to regulate the sleep cycle).
 - Use an alarm clock to maintain a stable waking hour.
 - Plan morning activities to help you get up and to keep you awake.
 5. Keep the bedroom for activities compatible with sleep (e.g. sleeping and sexual activities)
 - Refrain from watching TV or reading in bed.
 6. Avoid napping during the day, especially in the late afternoon.
 - If you do take a nap, it is recommended to do so between 1:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon, for a maximum of 1 hour.
 - Plan pleasurable and motivating activities to prevent from napping during the day.
 7. Reduce the time spent in bed not sleeping.
 - It is important to remember that the more you try to fall asleep, the more chances you will become anxious, and the less you will likely fall asleep.

SLEEP HYGIENE

- Refrain from taking stimulants 4 to 6 hours before going to bed:
 - Caffeine
 - Soft drink with caffeine
 - Coffee, tea
 - Iced tea
 - Chocolate
 - Over the counter medication (e.g., cough syrup and allergy medication)
 - Nicotine (cigarette)
 - These products stimulate the nervous system.
 - They can delay sleep onset and affect sleep during the night (e.g., more awakenings).

- Avoid taking alcohol 4-6 hours before going to bed:
 - It is a “downer” of the central nervous system.
 - Although it may initiate sleep faster, sleep tends to be lighter, more agitated and more interrupted.

- Try not to eat a heavy meal before going to bed:
 - Light snack is preferable (e.g., cheese or other milk product, bread, small bowl of cereals)

- Abstain from engaging in a vigorous physical activity at least 2 hours before going to bed:
 - Regular physical activity can improve sleep and increase the quality of deep sleep.
 - Physical exercise too close to sleep time can stimulate the body, increase body temperature and delay sleep onset.
 - Usually, the best results when exercising in late afternoon or early evening.

- Make sure that the bedroom is a quiet and comfortable space:
 - To decrease noise, use ear plugs or a fan for background noise.
 - To reduce light, wear an eye mask or use opaque / dark curtains.
 - Make sure that the mattress is comfortable.
 - Make sure that the bedroom temperature is adequate (too hot or too cold can disrupt sleep)

- Sleep medication (sleeping tablets)
 - If needed, short term use is recommended.
 - Physical and psychological dependency in the long term
 - Likely consequences: sleep less profound and less refreshing