

1. Develop a regular wake up and go to sleep routine

Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning - 8 hours later. Even during the weekend, try to keep a regular sleeping pattern. Have a wind-down period before bed with no stimulating activities involving the TV, computer, electrical devices or intense physical activity. This is your time to unwind and relax.

2. Snooze control

Make snooze control rules. Get up immediately if you can but if you are really tired give yourself no more than 3 chances to hit snooze and then that's it - go start your day!

3. Light exposure

To regulate your sleep-wake cycle, make sure your eyes are exposed to direct sunlight in the morning. This will signal to your brain that it is day time and assist in the regulation of your circadian rhythm (body clock) and further help you sleep at night.

4. Consume caffeine sensibly

Both coffee and tea have valuable nutritional qualities (e.g. antioxidants). However, due to their stimulatory nature, it's advisable to limit consumption to 1-2 cups per day and not to consume after 1pm. It can take up to 9 hours for caffeine to be processed by your body. As an alternative consider drinking caffeine-free herbal teas or pure water throughout the day & before bed.

5. Power nap

A short afternoon nap can help to reset your nervous system and support a better nights sleep, however this depends on the individual. If you do need a power nap, keep it to 20 minutes before 4pm so you will be tired enough to fall asleep at night.

6. Make sure you are tired

Do some exercise during the day. If you can only exercise at night, it may impact on your ability to sleep. Be mindful of what time you exercise. Invigorating exercise should be avoided within four hours of sleep so perhaps a gentle walk instead?

7. Reduce stress

Stress is a big contributor to insomnia. Cortisol, a stress hormone, is stimulating by its very nature and can have a serious impact on your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. Do all that you can to mitigate the stress in your life. Reduce cortisol with these tips:

- Make sure you are in bed by 9:30pm with the lights out by 10pm to avoid a cortisol surge which may keep you awake.
- Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, yoga, mindfulness, meditation, listening to soothing music.
- Regular exercise.
- Having fun, incorporating things you enjoy in your daily life creates a positive mood which has been linked with lower cortisol.

8. Prepare for tomorrow

Check your schedule for the next day as you finish work for the day. Write a 'to do' list so you are not worrying you have forgotten something later that night. Keep a notebook by the bed in case you get ideas that need to be remembered. Write them down and then forget about them until tomorrow.

9. Avoid alcohol

Don't use alcohol as a sedative to get you to sleep. Despite common belief, it does not promote good quality sleep. It causes 'micro wakening's' or small interruptions of sleep throughout the night which you may not be aware of. After drinking alcohol we do not get the full phases of sleep and it can cause people to wake up between 1.00am & 3.00am. According to Traditional Chinese medicine this is 'Liver' time or the time the liver is most active. Drinking alcohol is giving the liver more work to do and hinders sleep. Also, alcohol depletes the body of vital magnesium which is needed for good sleep.

10. Avoid all recreational drugs

No matter what! Drugs of any kind change brain waves and interfere with sleep quality.

11. Set an alarm

Set your alarm to alert you one hour before the time that you would like to be asleep. For example, if you wish to be asleep by 10 pm, set your alarm to alert you at 9pm that it's time to start winding down.

12. Don't keep an LED alarm clock next to your bed

LED alarm clocks and other devices in your bedroom use bright lights which may interfere with Melatonin (sleep hormone) production and stop your body from sleeping properly. If you must have an alarm clock, set it and put it into a drawer where you can't see the light.

13. Stop interacting with your technology before bed

It has been scientifically proven that interactions such as checking social media, emails, or texting can delay sleep onset by up to 1.5 hours. Avoid 'screens' of any kind at least 1 hour before you want to go to sleep. You can use your phone as a music player or to play guided meditations. Be sure to set your phone to 'night mode' and 'do not disturb' before doing so.

14. Minerals and nutrition for relaxation

Mineral deficiencies are a leading cause of sleep disturbances. Minerals are lacking in our modern food chain. Specific minerals taken before bed can have a positive impact on naturally relaxing the nervous system and aiding sleep.

15. Wash your worries away

Research has shown a hot bath or shower half an hour before bed helps bring about a change in your body and skin temperature which decreases the amount of time it takes

to fall asleep. Try adding Epsom Salts (rich in magnesium) to your bath for soothing and relaxing your muscles.

16. Nighttime snack

A small, healthy, nighttime snack may help you to sleep especially if it contains naturally relaxing foods such as turkey, bananas and almonds. These foods contain Tryptophan which is a "feel good" neurotransmitter and a natural tranquilizer that helps you sleep.

17. Go to the bathroom before bed

A full bladder is a common reason people wake during the night. Make sure to go to the bathroom before getting into bed for sleep. If you do need to use the bathroom during the night, and it is safe to do so, try to avoid turning on any lights so as to not wake yourself up too much.

18. Listen to relaxing music

Relaxing music, guided meditation or self-hypnosis can help encourage you to go to sleep. These are highly effective for many people. But make sure you turn the music off once you are finished. Have an easy turn off method such as only having to push one button to shut down your smartphone.

19. Do not fall asleep with the TV on

Blue light from your TV can interfere with Melatonin production and stop you from achieving the full phases of sleep. Make sure you switch the TV off before going to sleep.

20. Darken your room

Sleeping in complete darkness promotes the production of Melatonin and encourages your brain to switch off and fall asleep. Try blackout curtains, closing your bedroom door and wearing a mask that is soft on your skin but blocks out all light.

21. Reduce outside noise

Use noise-cancelling earplugs to reduce outside noise. Use soft earplugs to be comfortable. If you are very sensitive to noise you will most likely respond to some specific forms of magnesium supplementation before bed. Tinnitus or ringing in the ears often responds to specific forms of magnesium supplementation too.

22. Temperature regulation

Make sure you are not too cold or too hot. Be sure to wear wool next to your body in winter to keep your body warm and cotton in summer as cotton draws heat from the body. If you do wake too hot or too cold, action a solution straight away - don't lie there thinking about it.

23. Breathing techniques

Deep slow breathing can reset your nervous system and induce a state of relaxation which will enable you to go to sleep and get back to sleep if needed. Ask your Practitioner to provide the SleepDrops® body breath scan.

For more information on how to get great sleep, ask our sleep specialists.