

Talkspace Sleep Therapy

WORKSHEET

Exercise | Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene guidelines are designed to help your body clock establish a fixed time for sleep and to help your sleep drive be strong enough to assist in sleep when the time comes. They also can help establish more ideal environments for sleep and wakefulness. This is a sample plan to follow in order to improve sleep patterns.

Guidelines

1. Make and keep a consistent sleep schedule
 - Consistency will help your body clock settle in a rhythm. Waking up consistently is the most important of the two since it will begin to build your sleep drive consistently each day making it easier to fall asleep on time.
2. Wake up quickly and use natural light as much as possible and within one hour of waking, when possible
 - Dozing increases the time you are in bed, is not restful sleep, and delays the increase of your sleep drive. If you're unable to get natural light during your wake time, find a light that mimics the spectrum of daylight and turn it on in the morning.
3. Discontinue napping
 - Napping disrupts your body clock and diminishes your sleep drive. If you must nap, try to limit it to 20-30 minutes and only to early afternoon.

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4. Discontinue stimulant intake

- These include caffeine, sugar, and nicotine, as well as some medicines. If you consume these, try to do so before noon.

5. Limit alcohol use and avoid drinking within 3 hours of bedtime

- Alcohol interferes with the cycle of sleep and requires your body to spend energy metabolizing it rather than restoring the body. It is also a muscle relaxant and can soften your airway, impacting your ability to breathe while sleeping.

6. Don't go to bed too hungry or too full

- A large meal requiring heavy digestion before bed can increase acid reflux and the effort required by your body. Hunger can tend to put off sleep. A snack 2 hours before bedtime can help. Some people find that a high protein/low carb snack is helpful, others find the reverse.

7. Exercise regularly, but not right before bed

- Exercise helps to get rid of sleep reducing hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. Exercise also raises your body temperature which can interfere with sleep. Exercise 4-5 hours (or earlier) prior to sleep tends to work best.

8. Develop a before-bed routine

- A routine that lasts from 20 to 60 minutes will help the brain break from the running of daily life and prepare for sleep. A bath, light reading, stretching, dimming lights or other under-stimulating activities often help.

9. Avoid screens at least an hour before bed

- The blue light emanating from screens inhibits melatonin and natural sleep preparation. It is best to avoid them altogether, but if you need to use them, go the Settings of your device and turn off the blue light.

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10. Establish a comfortable sleeping environment

- A dark, quiet room with air circulation and a comfortable temperature tends to be best for most people. If you need a little noise to sleep, use “white noise” of a consistent volume. TVs and radios have many changes in volume and even if they do not fully wake you up and bring you out of a deep sleep and reduce your restfulness.

Helpful Tips

- When making these changes have realistic expectations and be patient. It will take time for benefits to manifest.
- Have a plan you can stick to and measure yourself against.
- Track your progress and base your decisions on data. Your sleep log will give you the information you need to see which changes are having the biggest impact.