

The following examples of good sleep hygiene may not all be applicable to everyone. Depending on your medical history, what is deemed “good” for one person may be adverse for someone else. It is important to work with your Sleep Specialist to determine what sleep hygiene guidance may work best for you.

1. Get screened for sleep disorders. See your Sleep Specialist for persistent sleep problems.
2. Keep to a regular sleep/wake schedule. Try to go to sleep and wake up about the same time every day. Infants may need to sleep as much as 17 hours per day, where an adult usually requires 8 hours of sleep per day to be fully rested. Try to develop a routine that provides enough sleep opportunity to feel fully rested.
3. Get some sun light. Ensure adequate exposure to natural light during hours when you are usually awake. This light exposure is an important part of a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
4. Some exercise may help promote good sleep, but it should not occur within three hours of bedtime.
5. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine within two to six hours of your bedtime depending on your level of sensitivity to stimulants. Chocolate, sodas, energy drinks, tea and many other consumables often contain stimulants. Check nutrition labels to confirm the addition of caffeine and other stimulants. In cases of severe or persistent daytime sleepiness, make an appointment to talk with a Sleep Specialist.
6. Avoid alcohol within two hours of bedtime. While alcohol is well known to speed the onset of sleep, it can disrupt sleep as the body begins to metabolize the alcohol.
7. Some foods can be supportive or disruptive to sleep. The general guidance is to avoid large meals within two hours of bedtime. When ruling out causes of sleep disruption, consider any recent dietary changes. Consider reducing fluid intake within the last two hours of sleep.
8. Keep naps short. Avoid naps longer than 45 minutes during hours when you are usually awake. Naps between 10-15 minutes are recommended when feeling pressure to sleep during your normal sleep-wake cycle. Consider increasing your naps to 25-30 minutes if shorter naps are not refreshing.
9. Associate your bed with sleep and calm. When sleep problems develop, the sleep environment may become associated with stress and anxiety. When this occurs, consider winding down in a different room and then returning to your sleep environment when you are ready to fall asleep.
10. During sleeping hours, minimize light exposure. Even small amounts of light can alert the brain that it is time to wake. Consider using an eye mask to block early morning light or changes in lighting during your sleep period. Consider full window blackout curtains when your sleep period is during the daytime hours. Avoid checking the time throughout your sleep period, as this may unnecessarily stimulate the brain.
11. Do a movement check. If a bed partner or pet is moving during your sleep, this can cause sleep disruption.
12. Wind Down. Build routines that promote relaxation and calm within 30 minutes of your sleep period. While winding down, avoid extremes and stimulus in general. Maintain low lighting, low sounds, low temperature, etc., during this time. Examples include reading, listening to music, meditation, breathing exercises, etc.
13. Keep it cool. Maintain a temperature between 65 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit when possible.
14. Use a white noise device such as a fan or air purifier to help block out background sounds that can disrupt sleep. Alternatively, consider using ear coverings that your doctor feels is safe for you to use.
15. Keep a sleep diary. Keeping a record of your sleep wake routine may help you and your sleep specialist identify some areas that could help you feel more rested.