

Steps for Better Sleep

1. Go to bed intending to sleep, only when you are sleepy. This step will allow you to become sensitive to internal cues of sleepiness so that you are more likely to fall asleep quickly when you go to bed.
2. Do not watch TV, read, eat, pay bills, or worry in bed. It should be used only for sleep or sexual activity. Activities not associated with relaxation can disturb sleep and should remain separate, even in another room, to facilitate sleep.
3. Do not remain in bed if you are unable to sleep. Do not watch the clock. Get up and go into another room. Go back to bed when you feel sleepy. This step helps you to associate your bed with falling asleep quickly. It will also allow you to exert control over your problems so that they will become more manageable.
4. If you are still unable to fall asleep, repeat step #3.
5. The alarm should be set to get up at the same time each morning, no matter how much sleep you got during the night. It is important to have a consistent sleep rhythm so that you will be more likely to sleep at night. If you are somewhat sleep-deprived, remember, the following night you will be more likely to fall asleep quickly. This will further help you establish an appropriate sleep routine. Do not use the snooze alarm; set the alarm for the exact time you need to get up.
6. Do not nap. Taking irregular naps during the day can disrupt regular sleep patterns. Try a period of relaxation lasting 20-30 minutes as a substitute for a nap.
7. Avoid caffeine at least six hours prior to sleep. Products that contain caffeine include: Excedrin, Miltel, most dark-colored sodas and Mountain Dew, most teas, and chocolate. Be sure to read the labels on products for hidden caffeine.
8. Alcohol before bedtime can disrupt sleep patterns. Avoid 3-4 hours prior to sleep.
9. Try to establish a relaxing routine prior to sleep such as taking a warm bath, meditation or other relaxation techniques.
10. Have a comfortable sleep environment including mattress, lighting, noise level, temperature and ventilation.
11. Exercise during the day helps sleep, but do so 3-4 hours before bedtime. Prior to sleep a relaxing walk or stretching exercise can be helpful.