

Ten Tips for Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Up to two-thirds of adult Americans say they have trouble getting a good night's sleep, and most people don't get the recommended seven or eight hours of sleep that are needed for good health. If you're having trouble getting a good night's sleep, the 10 tips below can help.

1. **Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.** A predictable schedule will help you make a habit of sleeping and waking at certain times.
2. **Create a sleep routine.** A bedtime routine can help train your mind and body to feel relaxed and ready to fall asleep. Your routine doesn't have to be complicated. You could take a bath, drink a cup of herbal tea, or do some light reading before bed.
3. **Get regular exercise.** Daily exercise can help you get to sleep faster and sleep better, but exercise too near to bedtime can keep you awake.
4. **Avoid or limit caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime.** The effects of caffeine last three to four hours or even longer for some people. An alcoholic drink might help you feel sleepy, but it can make you wake up later in the night.
5. **Eat your evening meal at least two hours before you go to bed.** A late meal or snack can result in high levels of stomach acid that may keep you awake.
6. **Avoid over-stimulating television, radio, movies, or online information just before bed.** Some programs, such as the news or an action movie, can make it hard to unwind and fall asleep.
7. **Keep your bedroom comfortable.** It should be cool, dark, and quiet.
8. **Reserve your bed for sleeping.** Your mind should associate your bed with sleeping. Don't bring paperwork or a laptop to bed with you.
9. **Deal with demanding tasks earlier in the day or evening.** It may be harder to relax and go to sleep if you handle troubling tasks just before bedtime.

10. **If you can't get to sleep within 20 minutes after you go to bed**, or if you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep, get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy again. Try reading, drinking a cup of warm milk, or listening to calming music.