

A Better Night's Sleep



Getting quality sleep is an important part of maintaining your physical and emotional health. Unfortunately, a third of adults in the U.S. report that they usually get less than the recommended amount of sleep, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Here are a few suggestions to help create the right conditions for a better night's sleep.

Building a Sleep Routine

Maintaining a sleep routine, including resting and waking at the same time each day, can help to regulate your body's natural rhythm. At bedtime, ensure the room is quiet, dark, and at a comfortable and cool temperature. Set aside up to an hour to transition into sleep by reading a book or listening to soft music. During this time, avoid brightly lit screens, as they can impair the release of melatonin, a sleep hormone.

Exercising Regularly

Being physically active may help with falling asleep more easily at night. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend adults get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise and two days of muscle

strengthening a week. If possible, plan to exercise outdoors in the morning for a daily boost of energy and limit exercising within a few hours before bedtime, as it can affect sleep quality.

Managing Stress

It's common to have anxious thoughts around bedtime. Setting aside time for meditation or journaling can help reduce nighttime anxiety. It's also helpful to find resources and support for managing stress, such as speaking with loved ones or a mental health specialist.

Limiting Naps

A short nap can be refreshing but sleeping more than 30 minutes can trigger your body to begin its deeper sleep cycle. Limit napping to a half hour or less to minimize effects on nighttime sleep quality.

Avoiding Caffeine and Eating Large Meals

Stimulants like caffeine affect the body's ability to rest. Avoid caffeine after 2 p.m. or eating a large meal late in the evening as these can disrupt sleep.