

HOW TO *sleep better*

KEEP CAFFEINE DARK
HABIT STRESSFUL RELAX
TY ANXIETY CONDITION
LAXING ALCOHOL EXE
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G DARK QUIET ROOM C
SOUND SLEEP FITNESS



The American Academy
of Sleep Medicine
www.aasmnet.org

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE *sleeping?*

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Many people have problems falling or staying asleep. Sleep problems can be caused by your body, mind, or outside factors. When you're lying in bed at night and can't fall or stay asleep, here are some possible reasons.

BODY:

You could be overstimulated by your pre-bed workout or cup of coffee with dinner.

MIND:

You could be anxious about an important presentation or excited for a party.

OUTSIDE FACTORS:

Maybe you are awakened by a neighbor's dog or a loud thunderstorm.

Don't Let Sleep Cause You Stress!

There are things you can do to sleep better. You can improve common problem areas, create a good sleeping environment, and establish a healthy sleep routine.

CHECK OUT THESE COMMON PROBLEM AREAS

CAFFEINE: Caffeine stimulates the brain and interferes with sleep. Try to use caffeine as-needed to help with tiredness in the morning. Regular use during the day can lead to sleep problems at night.

If you are having trouble falling asleep, you should not drink more than 200 milligrams of caffeine a day, about the amount in 2 cups of coffee. Avoid any caffeine after lunch.

Common sources of caffeine:

- Coffee
 - Tea
 - Soft drinks
 - Energy drinks
 - Chocolate
 - Medicines
(including common pain relievers)
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NICOTINE: Nicotine stimulates the brain, causes you to have trouble falling asleep, and can make your sleep worse. Tobacco products, like cigarettes and chewing tobacco, contain large quantities of nicotine. If you quit smoking, your sleep may be worse while you are in withdrawal. After your body adjusts, you will fall asleep faster and wake up less during the night.

ALCOHOL: If you drink alcohol around bedtime, it may help you fall asleep since it slows brain activity. However, alcohol is bad for your sleep. It can make you wake up during the night and give you nightmares. You may also have a headache the next morning. Avoid alcohol within 4-6 hours of bedtime.

Findings suggest that poor sleep can cause weight gain and lead to developing diabetes.

FOOD: Eating too close to bedtime, heavy meals, or foods that upset your stomach can negatively affect your sleep. Some people find a light snack at bedtime helps them sleep.



EXERCISE: Regular exercise can help you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly. Time your exercise to end over 6 hours before your bedtime to avoid trouble sleeping. Boredom and too little physical activity during the day can make it harder to fall asleep. Talk with your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: The artificial light generated by a laptop, tablet, or cell phone screen can interfere with your body's sleepiness cues. Turn off all electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

IMPROVE YOUR *sleep*

HOW TO CREATE A GOOD SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT

Make sure you have a comfortable bed in a dark, quiet room.

Is your room too bright?

Try blackout curtains or an eye mask.

Is your room too noisy?

Try a white noise machine or earplugs.

Is your room too hot or too cold?

In general, having a room temperature around 68° F is best for sleep. However, different people prefer hotter or colder rooms, so adjust the temperature if you are uncomfortable.

Sleep disorders can have a negative impact on physical and mental health if left untreated.

HOW TO ESTABLISH A HEALTHY SLEEP ROUTINE

- ✓ Get up at the same time every day, even on the weekend or during vacations.
- ✓ Avoid taking naps if possible. Limit napping time to less than 1 hour. Never take a nap after 3 p.m. Only use your bed for sleeping, having sex, or recovering from illness.
- ✓ Have a regular schedule for meals, medications, chores, and other activities. This will help your inner body clock run smoothly.
- ✓ Find rituals that help you relax each night before bed. This can include things like a warm bath, light snack, or a few minutes of reading.
- ✓ If you find yourself always worrying at bedtime, try to designate a specific time during the day to write down your worries and get these feelings out of your system.
- ✓ Try to have a regular sleep schedule, but don't go to bed until you are sleepy.
- ✓ If you are unable to fall or stay asleep within 20 minutes, get up. Try a quiet activity, and do not return to bed until you feel tired.

If you continue to experience problems after trying these solutions, talk to a health care provider.

For more information, see www.sleepcentral.org

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Dr. AASM Member

2510 N. Frontage Road
Darien, IL 60561

Phone: 630-737-9700

Fax: 630-737-9790

E-mail: email@aasm.net

Website: www.aasmnet.org

Office Hours: 8:00am–5:00pm