

# 12 Ways to Improve SLEEP

**SLEEP** is vital to our health and wellness. Lack of sleep has become one of the largest public health issues. Our industrialized world is facing a sleep-loss epidemic that is devastating to our health, life expectancy, safety, and productivity .



## KEEP THE SAME BED TIME

Go to bed at the same time EVERY night. Wake up at the same time every morning. This includes the weekend as we can't make up lost sleep. We are familiar with setting an alarm to wake up but try setting one to remind you to go to bed.



## EXERCISE

Exercise at least 30 minutes EVERY DAY. Exercise and sleep help one another and both make us feel good! Just avoid exercising at least 2-3 hours prior to your bed time.



## AVOID CAFFEINE & NICOTINE

These will interfere with your sleep. Have a cup of coffee in the morning but avoid it at least 8 hours before bed! Nicotine is a stimulant and will cause you to wake earlier than you should.



## AVOID ALCOHOL



Alcohol causes sleep disruption. It keeps us in light stages of sleep (takes away REM sleep) and impacts our breathing (snoring/mouth breathing/apnea). You will wake up once the effects of alcohol wear off, usually earlier than our body would like. This is why we are so tired after a night of drinking.



## NO FOOD OR DRINK CLOSE TO BEDTIME

Avoid having snacks too close to bed time as an active digestive system can also wake you or disrupt your sleep. Too much fluid before bed will also wake you in the middle of the night. Hydrate during the day!



## AVOID MEDICATIONS THAT DISRUPT SLEEP

AVOID drugs, supplements, medicines that interfere with sleeping. This includes sleeping pills which ultimately cause more harm to your body and sleep than help you sleep better.



## NAPPING

1/3 of Americans take naps. Naps should be short, between 10 and 20 minutes for optimal benefit. Short naps won't leave you feeling sleepy or groggy afterwards. Make sure you do not nap after 3:00 PM. This will have an effect on the sleep cycle later that night.



## RELAX

Take time to relax before bed. Set an alarm prior to your desired bedtime to give yourself time to unwind. Read a book, listen to music, perform breathing exercises, practice guided imagery, or meditate to help the body prepare for sleep.



## TAKE A BATH

Try to take a hot bath or shower before bed. It can help you relax but more importantly for sleep, it lowers your body temperature. It is normal for our body to drop in temperature (1-2 degrees F) reaching the lowest temperature in the early morning.



## CHANGE THE SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT



Make the room DARK. Make the room COOL (60-67 degrees F is recommended), REMOVE DISTRACTIONS like phones, TVs, tablets, computers from the bedroom.



## GET SOME SUN

Get outside and get some fresh air and sunlight. We need at least 30 minutes per day. Rise when the sun rises or if you start your day earlier, turn on bright lights to help you wake up. We need about 1 hour of bright light to help us come out of sleep cycle.



## GO TO BED!

Dim the lights an hour before bed to help your body get ready for sleep. DO NOT LIE AWAKE in bed for more than 20 minutes or if you feel anxious. Instead, go do something relaxing in a different room until you feel sleepy and then return to bed.

## SLEEP DEPRIVATION (<7 hours a night)

Linked to

- CANCER
- HEART DISEASE
- DIABETES
- OBESITY/ CRAVING SUGARS AND CARBS
- DEPRESSION
- ANXIETY
- ILLNESS/INFECTION
- ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE
- REDUCED COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE, FOCUS, CREATIVITY
- REDUCED PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE
- POOR PRODUCTIVITY
- DECREASED LIFESPAN

## DO YOU SLEEP LESS THAN 8 HOURS PER NIGHT?