

Tips for good sleep

- If you are unable to fall asleep or stay asleep, leave your bedroom and engage in a quiet activity. Do not fall asleep in another room. Return to bed when – and only when – you are sleepy.
- Wake up at the same time each day, even when your sleep has been disrupted, when you're tired, and on the weekend.
- Use your bedroom only for sleep. Don't train your body to think this is a spot for talking on the phone, watching TV, etc.
- Avoid taking naps. If you can't help it, then make sure to nap for less than an hour and before 3 pm.
- When you're in bed, avoid watching the clock. Distract your mind from the thought that you're losing sleep. Understand that you can function on very little sleep. Worrying about losing sleep does not help you fall asleep!
- If you are awake worrying, leave the room to read or to make a brief list of your worries with 1 to 2 possible solutions or plans of action for each worry/problem.
- Avoid caffeine within 4 to 6 hours of bedtime.
- A light snack (not a big meal) before bed can be helpful.
- Exercise several times per week.
- Keep your bedroom cool and dark and without animals that tend to wake you in the night.
- Turn yourself down during the last hour of the day. Avoid rigorous physical and mental activity (exercise, homework, emotional upsets). Follow the same nightly routine to signal your body that bedtime is near. For example, have a cup of decaffeinated tea, brush your teeth, use lavender lotion on your hands and arms, and dim the lights.
- Turn off phones, TVs, and videogames well before bedtime. "Exposure to artificial light before going to bed can increase alertness and suppress the release of melatonin, a sleep-promoting hormone" (Charles Czeisler of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, as quoted by Reuters March 7, 2011).