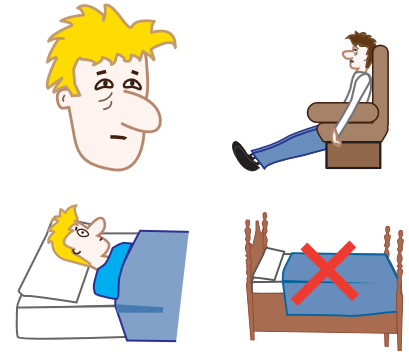


How Can You Get Better Sleep?

- Good sleep habits (also called “sleep hygiene”) improve mental well-being
- Poor sleep can make you feel more worried, sad, and hurt your brain
- Sleep improves your mood, memory, and helps your brain restore and repair itself

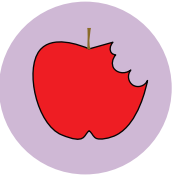


Tips for Getting Better Sleep



Stick to a Sleep Schedule

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends
- Try not to nap, but if needed, keep it under 30 minutes and do it before 3 PM. Long or late naps can make it harder to fall asleep by lowering your body’s natural sleep drive, or its want to sleep



Be Mindful of When and What you Eat

- Avoid heavy meals before bed
- If hungry, try a light snack (banana, apple, yogurt, a small serving of nuts)



Make Your Bedroom a Sleep-Friendly Space

- Keep the room cool, dark, and quiet (think “like a cave”)
- Use blackout curtains, white noise machines, or sleep masks
- Use your bed for sleep and rest only—no work, TV, or eating



Use Your Bed for Sleep Only

- Avoid working, watching TV, or using your phone in bed. This helps your brain learn that being in bed means it’s time to sleep.
- If you can’t fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something quiet and calming in low lighting (like reading a book) until you feel sleepy



Exercise at the Right Time

- Morning or afternoon exercise helps with better sleep
- Avoid intense workouts within 2 hours of bedtime



Manage Worries and Stress Before Bed

- Write down your worries in a “Tomorrow List” to help you relax. Do this in 10 minutes or less
- Practice deep breaths or try to relax your muscles



How Can You Get Better Sleep?

Things You Should Avoid

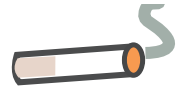
AVOID



Looking at
screens



Sleeping
pills

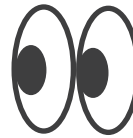


Smoking

Coffee



Watching
the clock



Staying in
bed when
you can't
sleep

- **Drinking coffee or smoking** – these keep you from sleeping by making your brain more awake
- **Looking at your phone or any other screen before bed** – the blue light confuses your brain into thinking it is day time and you will feel more awake
- **Staying in bed if you can't sleep** – instead, get up and do a quiet activity, then try again
- **Watching the clock** – this can make you worry about not sleeping
- **Using sleeping pills without medical advice** – these can cause you to need them too much

Wrong Ideas People Often Believe About Sleep

"I can catch up on sleep over the weekend."

TRUTH: Sleeping in on weekends messes up your body clock. A consistent schedule is better.

"A glass of wine helps me sleep."

TRUTH: Alcohol makes you sleepy at first, but messes up deep sleep later in the night.

"I only need 4–5 hours of sleep to function."

TRUTH: While some people feel they can get by on little sleep, less than 7 hours per night increases the risk of mental health issues, heart disease, and problems with memory and thinking.

When to Talk to Your Health Professional

- If falling asleep or staying asleep is a struggle most nights of the week and is causing you issues
- If you feel very tired during the day, even after 7+ hours of sleep. Includes needing naps
- If you snore or gasp for air often while you are asleep (possible sleep apnea)
- If sleep problems have lasted more than a few weeks



Neuroscience Education Institute

Last updated 04/2025