



You're seven steps away from better sleep

Getting enough high-quality sleep can be as important to your health and well-being as eating right and exercising. Besides making you grumpy and forgetful, a lack of sleep can actually put you at risk for serious health conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and diabetes.

While you might not be able to control all of the factors that get in the way of good sleep, there are some things you can do to encourage better sleep.

Simple sleep tips:

- 1 Stick to a sleep schedule** – Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends, holidays and days off.
- 2 Pay attention to what you eat and drink** – Don't go to bed either hungry or stuffed – your discomfort might keep you up. And limit drinks before bed to prevent midnight trips to the bathroom.
- 3 Create a bedtime ritual** – Do the same things each night to tell your body it's time to wind down. Things like taking a warm bath or shower, or reading a book. Avoid watching TV or screen time – it may interfere with sleep.
- 4 Get comfortable** – Create a room that's ideal for sleeping. Some people find that room-darkening shades, earplugs, running a fan or white noise machine helps.
- 5 Include physical activity in your daily routine** – Regular physical activity can help you to fall asleep faster and enjoy deeper sleep. Avoid exercising too close to bedtime, though, or you might be too energized to fall asleep.
- 6 Manage stress** – When you have too much to do — and too much to think about — your sleep is likely to suffer. Before bed, jot down what's on your mind and then set it aside for tomorrow.
- 7 Know when to contact your doctor** – Nearly everyone has an occasional sleepless night — but if you often have trouble sleeping, contact your doctor. Identifying and treating any underlying causes can help you get the better sleep you deserve.



Sources:

Mayo Clinic website, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/sleep/art-20048379> Accessed March 24, 2017
Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School, <http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep/whats-in-it-for-you/health>
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