

June 2016: How to Sleep Better

Sleep experts agree that your daytime activities and the effectiveness of your sleep environment are critical to getting a good night's sleep. Try the following remedies if you have trouble sleeping:

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications could be disturbing your sleep.
- Exercise regularly, but not too close to your bedtime. It's best to finish exercising at least four hours before you go to bed. Working out raises your body's temperature, which can prevent or delay sleep.
- Clear your mind of the day's stress. Take a few minutes to talk about the day with a friend. Or, try making lists to help clear your mind of the day's stress. That way, when you get into bed, you can focus on dozing, not doing.
- If sleep won't come, try deep-breathing or relaxation exercises. If you still can't sleep, get up and do something that's not stimulating until you feel sleepy.
- Pay attention to what you drink in the evening. Consuming drinks that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea or cola, can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- Don't eat too close to bedtime. Besides making it difficult to get to sleep, eating in the late evening raises the risk for heartburn, acid reflux and gastroesophageal reflux (GERD).
- Avoid alcoholic beverages in the evening. They can make you fall asleep faster, but they cause early morning awakenings and fitful sleep.
- Don't smoke. Smokers are more likely to have trouble sleeping than nonsmokers.
- Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and cool.
- Replace a lumpy, sagging or worn-out mattress. A comfortable mattress that offers good support can help you fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Ask a doctor for help if your roommate or partner snores or has an illness that disturbs your sleep.
- Limit naps. A 15- to 20-minute nap in the early afternoon can give you an energy boost, but a longer nap can throw off your sleeping schedule.

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