



How to Get Quality Sleep & Improve Your Health

No doubt about it, sleep is foundational to our health and longevity. It's just as important as a healthy diet and regular exercise. The CDC reports that 1 in 3 adults don't get enough sleep.

The regulation of sleep is processed by the balance of the circadian rhythm, aka the "sleep/wake cycle." Our circadian rhythm is the 24-hour internal clock in our brains responding to light and dark.

What can we do to get a better night's sleep? There are ways to improve our sleep habits and, in effect, our overall health and well-being.

9 Best Strategies For A Better Night's Sleep

1. **Routine.** Having the same sleep/wake time each day is the most critical factor for sleeping well.
2. **Morning Light.** Getting natural light within the first half hour of waking up helps to regulate our cortisol and melatonin hormones, which keep our body's circadian rhythms in sync.
3. **Get Moving.** Regular daily exercise helps your body relax and therefore sleep better at night. Pick up your pace and aim for 10,000 steps per day!
4. **Curb The Caffeine.** Everyone metabolizes caffeine differently, but caffeine's half-life is generally around five hours. Therefore, half the caffeine in an 8-ounce cup of coffee will still be in your system five hours later. So, think about that afternoon Cup-of-Joe because it could affect your sleep later.
5. **Eat Early.** Our digestion starts to slow down in the evening. The later we eat, the more difficult it may be to digest our meal which can lead to indigestion and reflux. Try to finish your meal at least three hours before going to bed.
6. **Go Easy With Alcohol.** Even two drinks can contribute to fragmented sleep, leaving you tired and mentally sluggish the next day. Alcohol can disrupt melatonin production, which affects your circadian rhythms.
7. **Wind It Down.** We are great at creating regular nighttime routines for kids. Yet why can't we seem to develop successful nighttime routines for ourselves? As adults, we forget how important they are to us too. Creating a nightly routine helps to signal our body and brain that it's time to unwind. Try taking a warm bath with Epsom salts, reading a book, or journaling. More importantly, find a routine that works best for you.
8. **Disengage.** Turn off electronics a least an hour before bed. The blue light emitted from electronic screens can prevent the natural rise in melatonin (your sleep hormone). If you need to be on your electronics, I suggest installing a nighttime app or wearing blue light-blocking glasses.
9. **Keep Your Bedroom Cool & Dark.** Your breathing, heart rate, and body temperature drop as you sleep. If your bedroom is cool, it makes it easier to fall asleep. Aim to keep the nighttime temperature around 65 degrees; this is usually ideal for sleeping. Make sure to use curtains or blinds to keep out artificial light. Even small amounts of light can disrupt our sleep.