



## Proper Sleep Hygiene

- avoid napping during the day<sup>1</sup>
- avoid stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine or vigorous exercise around bedtime<sup>1</sup>
- avoid alcohol around bedtime (~4-6 hours prior to) as it has an immediate sleep-inducing effect. However after being metabolized by the body, it causes a stimulant like effect<sup>3</sup>
- regular exercise can help promote good restful sleep, especially if done in the afternoon<sup>1</sup>
- avoid food intake around bedtime i.e. heavy, spicy, or sugary foods 4-6 hours prior to bedtime<sup>1,3</sup>
- a light snack high in the amino acid tryptophan ( i.e. bananas) may help you to sleep<sup>3</sup>
- get enough sunlight during the day, this will help promote regular sleep-wake cycles<sup>1</sup>
- only use your bed for sleeping. Avoid watching TV or reading in bed prior to tucking in<sup>1</sup>
- make the room comfortable to allow for a long restful nights sleep. A cool temperature is most conducive to sleep <sup>1,3</sup>
- if you are having trouble falling asleep, try progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)<sup>2</sup>.
- first known to have been practiced in 1915, PMR means to systematically contract and release muscles groups within the body<sup>2</sup>
- PMR - start at your feet and work your way up. Try to focus on only your breath, ensuring it is slow, deep, and relaxed. This will help keep your mind from wandering.
- PMR is known to help with overall physical relaxation and provide additional health benefits<sup>2</sup>
- PMR has been know to help improve fatigue and overall sleep quality<sup>2</sup>
- fix a set sleep time and wake time. Your body grows accustomed to falling asleep at a certain time<sup>3</sup>
- block out distracting noise and light. This can be done with an eye mask and earplugs<sup>3</sup>
- practice a bedtime routine that helps you relax, let go of the day and the events that came with it<sup>1</sup>
- don't take your problems to bed, leave them behind with the day you are finishing<sup>3</sup>
- get into your sleeping position. If you don't fall asleep within 15 - 30 minutes, get up and go to another room and stay there until sleepy (maybe try reading)<sup>3</sup>

### References

1. Thorpy M. Sleep Hygiene. Sleep Matters Spring 2003. <http://sleepfoundation.org/ask-the-expert/sleep-hygiene>
2. Gehrman P . 13 natural ways to fall asleep without sleeping pills. Everyday Health 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/11/natural-sleep-aids\\_n\\_3882229.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/11/natural-sleep-aids_n_3882229.html)
3. Anonymous. Sleep Hygiene. University of Maryland Medical Center - Sleep Disorders Center 2013. <http://umm.edu/programs/sleep/patients/sleep-hygiene>