

Sleep Well

Our sleep can be disturbed for many reasons, including stress and worry. Here are a few tips that can help improve your sleep.

Pick a regular time to go to bed and wake up

It's important to have a routine and go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.

Reserve the bed for sleep

Your brain needs to be re-trained to recognize that the bed is only for sleep. Make sure all you do in bed is sleep. Avoid reading, watching TV, or worrying in bed.

Don't look at the clock

Looking at the clock during the night can make us worry about how much sleep we are getting and how we will feel the next day. These thoughts can keep us awake. Instead, gently remind yourself that you can think about things in the morning. Do some breathing and self-talk exercises. Download an app with exercises like [Calm](#) or [Headspace](#).

Don't stay in bed for too long

Sometimes we stay in bed for 12 hours but only sleep for six. It is better to be in bed for 7 hours and sleep for six. Make your sleep efficient and you will feel more rested.

Give yourself a bedtime routine

Watching the news or going on social media before bed can make it hard for our minds to settle down for sleep. Instead, try reading, listening to music, stretching gently, or having a shower or bath before bed.

Track your sleep

Use a [sleep diary](#) or [sleep calculator](#) to learn what habits might be affecting your sleep, and what you can do to improve your sleep patterns.

Reduce coffee, tea, and chocolate after noon

It is a good idea to avoid caffeine late in the day, even if it does not normally affect you.

Reduce alcohol and smoking

Alcohol can interfere with getting a deep sleep. Nicotine can be stimulating.

Avoid medications that can worsen sleep

Decongestants (e.g. pseudoephedrine or Sudafed), or pain medication containing caffeine (e.g. Tylenol 1, 2, or 3) can cause trouble sleeping. Avoid using Gravol to help you fall asleep. Gravol and other sleep aids are not a good long-term solution and increase the risk of falls, memory problems, and daytime fatigue.

Relaxation exercises

There are many videos on YouTube with exercises that can help with getting to sleep. Below are a few examples. Find one that you like!

- [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#) (5 minutes)
- [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#) (15 minutes)
- [Guided Imagery](#) (18 minutes)

When to talk to your doctor

- If you haven't slept at all for more than 2 or 3 days
- If you have tried the suggestions above but they are not helping
- If you snore loudly

For more tips and sleep hygiene strategies, visit [My Sleepwell](#).