

SleepPsychologist

TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR SLEEP

- **Good Routine.** Go to bed when you feel sleepy. Wake up at the same time each day, 7 days a week.
- **Exercise.** Try to exercise at least 30 minutes on most days. Not too late in the day.
- **Stimulants.** Coffee, coca cola, certain teas, and dark chocolate contain the stimulant caffeine, and its effects can take as long as 8 hours to wear off fully. Reduce caffeine after 2pm. Nicotine is also a stimulant. Reduce smoking close to bed time.
- **Alcohol.** Alcohol is a sedative and sedation is not considered sleep. Having alcohol before sleep may help you relax, but heavy use of it interferes with sleep quality, keeping you in the lighter stages of sleep. You also tend to wake up in the middle of the night when the effects of the alcohol have worn off.
- **Meals and Drinking.** A light snack is okay, but a large meal can cause indigestion that interferes with sleep quality. Drinking lots of water or fluids at night can cause frequent awakenings with needing the loo.

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- **Medicine that delay or disrupt sleep.** Some commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure, or asthma medications, as well as some over-the-counter and herbal remedies for flu, or allergies, can disrupt sleep patterns. If you have trouble sleeping, talk to your GP or pharmacist to see whether any medications you're taking might be contributing to your insomnia and ask whether they can be taken at other times during the day or early in the evening.
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- **Naps.** Napping is ok if you are a good sleeper. If you have insomnia, late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
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- **Relax before bed.** A relaxing activity of your choice, such as reading or listening to music, is helpful before sleep. Avoid use of your phone.
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- **Hot bath.** The drop in body temperature after getting out of the bath may help you feel sleepy, and the bath can help you relax and slow down; so you're more ready to sleep.
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- **Safe and tidy environment.** Reduce clutter in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep. You sleep better if the temperature in the room is kept on the cool side (16-18C).
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- **Devices.** A TV, mobile phone, or computer in the bedroom can be a distraction and deprive you of needed sleep.
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- **Comfort.** Having a comfortable mattress and pillow can help promote a good night's sleep. Individuals who have insomnia often watch the clock. Turn the clock's face out of view so you don't worry about the time while trying to fall asleep - especially in the middle of the night.
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- **Light.** Daylight is key to entraining good circadian rhythms. Try to get outside in natural light for at least 30 minutes each day. If possible, wake up with the sun or use very bright lights in the morning.

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- **Don't lie in bed awake.** If you find yourself still awake after staying in bed for more than 15 minutes or if you are starting to feel anxious or worried, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep. Look out for a big old yawn.

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- **Book an appointment with Sleep Psychologist** if you continue to have trouble sleeping.

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- **Contact.** You can contact us at : info@slepppsychologist.co.uk
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