

# ***Basic Sleep Hygiene***

## **Get out of bed at the same time each morning.**

Two crucial factors that help you sleep is your circadian rhythm and sleep pressure. By getting up at the same time each morning, you adjust your circadian rhythm and build up enough sleep pressure for the following night. You can't make up for a lousy night of sleep, so this also applies on the weekends.

## **Don't go to bed until you are sleepy and get out if you can't sleep. Use the bed and bedroom for sleeping only.**

When you toss and turn in bed and can't sleep, you get stressed and associate this stress with your bed or bedroom. Avoid this by waiting to go to bed until you are ready to sleep and get out if you're not sleeping in about 20 minutes. The same thing happens when you do other things in bed than sleeping. It's recommended that you only use the bed and the bedroom for sleep (and sex).

## **Avoid daytime naps**

Every minute you are awake you build up sleep pressure which adds up. If you nap you release some of this pressure and it will be harder for you to fall asleep when you should. Some can manage with short naps under 30 minutes but it's not for everyone. Experiment with this and see what works for you.

## **Avoid blue light from screens**

New research suggests that our circadian rhythm is adjusted by the blue light emitted from mobile phones and laptops. There are now usually built-in software in most devices that can filter out the blue light.

## **Avoid caffeine**

Caffeine is great for waking you up in the morning but if you drink coffee in the afternoon your ability to fall asleep will be greatly reduced. This is caused by the way caffeine blocks a sleep-promoting hormone in your brain called Adenosine. Peoples sensitivity to caffeine varies and some get rid of the caffeine faster than others.

## **Alcohol**

Alcohol might help you fall asleep faster but research has shown that alcohol affects your sleep quality by suppressing REM sleep. Alcohol also has the negative effect that it will make you sleep lighter and frequently wake you up.

### **When sleep hygiene isn't enough**

When people really struggle with sleep and have done so for a while, sleep hygiene advice is often not enough. If you have already employed many of the steps described here with little success the American Academy for Sleep Medicine, The American College of Physicians and the European Sleep Research Society recommends cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I). Read more about CBT-I on [sleepy.com/cbt-for-insomnia](https://sleepy.com/cbt-for-insomnia).