

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

1. **Regular sleep time** – Establishing a **regular sleep/wake schedule** is very important, especially a regular time of arising in the morning. There should be no more than a 1-hour deviation from day to day, including weekends. Getting up at 6:00 AM on weekdays and then sleeping until noon on weekends should be discouraged.
2. **Proper sleep environment** – Special attention should be paid to **avoid temperature extremes** in the bedroom; excessively warm temperatures disturb sleep. **Noise, light and electronics can disrupt sleep**, so work to keep these to a minimum. Sleeping with the radio or TV on should be discouraged. A clock radio that automatically turns itself off may be useful in weaning someone away from the need to have the noise while asleep.
3. **Wind-down time** – Time to wind down prior to sleep is important. You should stop any activity that is very stimulating **at least 30 minutes prior to bedtime**. Change your activity to something nonstressful, such as reading or listening to quiet music.
 - ★ **NO “screen time”** (i.e., video games, computer, phone, TV) during wind-down time.
4. **Stimulus control** – This procedure, an important component of sleep hygiene, involves removing from the bedroom all stimuli that are not associated with sleep. **The bedroom should be used for sleep**. Activities such as eating, drinking, arguing, and discussing the day’s problems should be done elsewhere, because their associated arousal may interfere with sleep onset.
 - ★ Set a routine for bed to cue the body (e.g., bathroom, brush teeth, pajamas, pick out clothes, etc.).
5. **Avoidance of time in bed worrying** – Once in bed, it is counter-productive to worry and fret about not being able to sleep, or to worry about activities that may be planned for the next day. **If you are not able to go to sleep after 30 minutes, get up & read, complete a task, and then return to bed after you feel sleepy**. Remaining in bed trying to fight wakefulness can further aggravate a conditioned arousal to the sleep setting.
 - ★ Set a worry time in the afternoon if needed.
6. **Avoidance of caffeine** – Caffeine is quite disruptive of sleep for many people. **Caffeine consumption should be limited to before noon** in anyone that has a problem falling asleep at a regular time in the evening. Caffeine is routinely found in coffee, tea, many soft drinks, chocolate, energy shots, etc.
 - ★ Limit all liquids 1 hour prior to bed at least.

7. **Late tryptophan snack** – A bedtime snack, such as a glass of milk, a cookie, a banana, or a similar high-tryptophan food, may help promote sleep onset.
 - ★ Only a **small** snack – eating a full meal raises body temperature – avoid doing so 2 hours prior to bed.
8. **Regular exercise** – Periods of exercise 20-30 minutes long at least 3-4 days a week should be encouraged. This has been shown to promote slow-wave sleep. Exercise should not occur within 3 hours of bedtime because involuntary arousal that accompanies exercise may delay sleep onset.

How much sleep do we need?

Preschool: 11-13 hours

Children: 9-11 hours

Teens: 9 hours

Adults: 7-8 hours