Sleeping Tips

Phoenix
AUSTRALIA

Tips to help you get a good night's sleep

Tips for hetting to sleep

- Get some fresh air and sunshine during the day
- Take a hot bath before bed
- Sleep when you are sleepy
- If you can't sleep, get up and try again

These are some little things you can do before going to bed that may assist you in falling asleep. Fresh air and sunshine during the day helps your body clock to function optimallyso that you are feeling sleepy at the right time. Taking a hot bath can also help you feel sleepy as it increases your body temperature, leading to a drop in body temperature afterwards, which has been associated with sleepiness. As bed time approaches, try to go to bed when you are feeling tired or sleepy,but if you can't get to sleep after about 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then try again.

Consider your sleeping environment

- Remove distractions or stimuli
- Use bed for sleeping

It is important that your bed and bedroom are comfortable for sleeping. Considershutting out bright lightsandnoisesand silencingyour mobile phone. On the other hand, if you are easily startled by noise, playing white noise or soft music can help block out noises that may wake you. If you prefer some light in the room as you sleep, a nightlight can make you feel more comfortable. Your brain also needs to associate going to bed with going to sleep, so use your bed only for sleep and sex.

Develop good habits and routines

- Create a sleep ritual
- Maintain a daytime and night time routine
- Eat well and at appropriate times
- Exercise and be active

You can train your body to know when it's time for sleep by developing rituals such as doing relaxing stretches or reading a book directly before bed time. It's also helpful to go to bed and get up at the same time every day and to keep your daytime routine the same, even if you've hada bad night's sleep. Creating these routines setsyour body clock into a regular rhythm which helps you to drift off to sleep at night and feel awake in the morning. Include exercise and a healthy diet into your daily routine. Exercise, especially in the mornings, can improve your daytime alertness and strengthen your sleep-wake cycles.
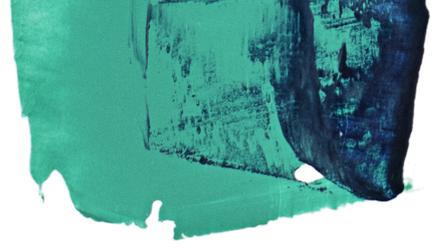
Things to avoid

- Taking naps
- Caffeine and nicotine
- Alcohol
- Watching the clock

Try to avoid naps, caffeine, nicotine and alcohol at least 4-6 hours before going to sleep, as they can interfere with the body's ability to fall asleepandstay asleep,as well as the quality of your sleep. Avoid watching the clock as you are trying to sleep, as this can reinforce any negative thoughts about sleep and interfere with your ability to fall asleep.

Trauma and nightmares

- Seek trauma-focused help if you have experienced trauma
- Notify your treating health professional if you experience nightmares

Traumatic events can have a debilitating effect on your sleep,and nightmares can contributeto difficulty with falling and/or returning to sleep. There are professionals specially trained to work with people affected by trauma. If you avoid sleep because you are fearful of nightmares, speak to your treating health professional about these experiences.

Additional resources

- Open Arms' Sleeping Better program: An educational and skills-based group program helping veterans to understand the sleep process and how to better manage their sleep problems. For more information, call 1800 011 046.

- Healthy Sleeping tool: Part of the High Res website and mobile phone app, the tool analyses the user's sleep behaviours and tailors advice and tips to help improve sleep. For more information, visit https:// highres.dva.gov.au/highres/#!/home

Useful services and resources

Coronavirus Health Information Line
1800 020 080

Department of Health
www.health.gov.au

healthdirect hotline
1800 022 222

For more COVID-19 related resources visit
www.phoenixaustralia.org/covid-19

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