

# Ten Tips for a Good Night's Sleep



## 1 Have a regular sleep pattern

Try to go to bed at the same time every evening and get up at the same time every morning. This will help your body to work out a healthy sleep routine.

## 2 Spend the right amount of time in bed

Most adults need about 8 hours sleep every night. Some require more and some less. Many poor sleepers spend much more than 8 hours in bed and this makes fragmented sleep a habit. Except if you have lengthy sleep requirements, limit your time in bed to no more than 8.5 hours. If you often take hours to fall asleep, go to bed later. Remember that children need more sleep than adults.

## 3 Bed is for sleeping, not entertainment

Television, computers and other distractions can interfere with your sleep. It is better not to sleep with your TV on. Your mind needs to be in the habit of knowing that if you are in bed, you are there to sleep. Don't stay in bed if you are wide awake.

## 4 Wind down and relax before going to bed

Have a buffer zone before bedtime. Sort out any problems well before going to bed. This may mean setting aside a 'worry time' during the day. Use this time to go over the day's activities and work out a plan of action for the next day. Try to avoid using your computer within one hour of bedtime.

Exercise is fine, but not too late in the evening. Find a relaxation technique that works for you.

## 5 Make sure your bedroom is comfortable

You should have a quiet, dark room with comfortable bedding and good temperature control.

## 6 Alcohol, caffeine and cigarettes – to be avoided

Alcohol may help you to get off to sleep, but will disrupt your sleep during the night. Caffeine (tea, coffee, cola drinks) and the nicotine in cigarettes are stimulants that can keep you awake.

## 7 Avoid daytime naps

Sleeping during the day will make it much more difficult to sleep well at night. If a nap is absolutely necessary, for example because of a late night, then limit this to about thirty minutes. Make sure that you are awake for at least 4 hours before going back to bed.

## 8 Don't lie awake watching the clock

Watching the time on a clock just makes you anxious about not being asleep. If possible take the clock out of your bedroom. If you need the clock for the alarm, turn it around so that you cannot see the time.

## 9 Avoid sleeping pills except in exceptional circumstances

They do not fix the cause of your sleeping problem.

## 10 You may need professional help

If you are still having trouble sleeping, if you have persistent problems with mood, restlessness in bed, severe snoring or waking up unrefreshed despite what should be adequate length sleep, make sure that you go and see your doctor.

This information is produced by:

**Sleep Health Foundation**  
ABN 91 138 737 854  
[www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au)

A national organisation devoted to education, advocacy and supporting research into sleep and its disorders

**Sleep Disorders Australia**  
ABN 98 075 427 459  
[www.sleepoz.org.au](http://www.sleepoz.org.au)

A voluntary group offering assistance and support to people and their families living with sleep disorders

**Australasian Sleep Association**  
ABN 32 172 170 561  
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The peak national association of clinicians and scientists devoted to investigation of sleep and its disorders

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