

10 Tips to Improve Sleep

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Jonathan Swinton



Studies show insomnia rates are increasing as people struggle to sleep more than at any time in history. This is an alarming trend because so many other health issues are related to sleep. Studies show that adults need an average of 8 hours of sleep per night and teens need 9 to 10 hours of sleep per night. Unfortunately, as insomnia is on the rise a host of side complications are increasing in frequency such as depression, anxiety, weight gain, irritability, difficulty focusing, and decreased productivity.

Here are ten tips you can implement to combat your struggles with sleep:

1. Don't play on your phone before bed. Charge it across the room or in another room entirely so you are not tempted to look at it while you are trying to fall asleep or if you wake up in the night. Get a blue light filtering application and have it set to turn on several hours before your typical bedtime. The blue light emitted from phones can prevent your brain from secreting the melatonin you need to fall asleep.
2. Make sure the temperature is cool and comfortable. Temperatures that are uncomfortable, particularly excessive warmth can inhibit sleep.
3. Avoid clockwatching. If you keep looking at the clock to see what time it is you may increase stress or anxiety, preventing you from falling asleep. Keep your clock so you can't see it while you are in bed.

4. Don't go to bed hungry. Having a light snack can help your system not worry about sending you messages of hunger. Don't have a full meal before bed as excessive eating can impact sleep as well.

5. Keep a notepad next to your bed. If you find yourself thinking about things that need to be remembered or tasks that need to be completed write them down. Writing down anything on your mind before bed will help you leave it until the next day.

6. Don't take naps. I know, disappointing. I love naps as much as the next person. However, few things will disrupt your evening sleep more than taking a nap.

7. Avoid exercise in the second half of the day. Exercise is so helpful for you. However, its activating effects are better left for the first half of the day.

8. Try to reduce the excessive commitments in your life. Setting boundaries with your commitments can have a measurable difference on your stress and sleep.

9. Wake up at the same time every day. Forcing yourself to wake up at the same time may make you tired following the tough nights. However, studies have shown that this will increase the chances you will fall asleep the following night.

10. Read a book. If there is one activity that you can do just before bed that will help, it is reading. It fully engages the brain which can stop its focus on things that might keep you awake. Six minutes of reading can reduce stress in the moment by 68% and clear your mind for sleep.

Be disciplined in applying these tips and take back your sleep.