

Practicing Good Sleeping Habits

- Avoid napping during the day₁
- Avoid stimulates such as caffeine, nicotine or vigorous exercise around bedtime₁
- Avoid alcohol around bed time (4-6 hours) - it has the immediate sleep-inducing effect, however after being metabolized by the body there's a stimulant like effect₃
- Regular exercise can help promote good restful sleep especially if done in the afternoon₁
- Avoid food intake around bedtime, especially heavy, spicy, or sugary foods 4-6 hours prior to bedtime_{1,3}
- A light snack of foods high in the amino acid, tryptophan (i.e. Bananas), may help you to sleep₃
- Get enough sunlight during the day, this will help promote regular sleep-wake cycles₁
- Leave your bed for sleeping, avoid watching tv or reading prior to tucking in₁
- Make the room comfortable to allow for a long restful night's sleep, a cool temperature is most conducive to sleep (21-24°C) _{1,3}
- If you are having trouble falling asleep try progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)₂
- First known to have been practiced in 1915, PMR means to systematically contract and release muscles groups within the body₂
- PMR is known to help with overall physical relaxation and provide additional health benefits₂
- PMR technique has demonstrated improvements in fatigue and overall sleep quality in a study utilizing women throughout a period of their breast cancer treatments₂
- Organise a set sleep time and wake time, your body grows accustomed to falling asleep at a certain time₃
- Block out distracting noise and light₃
- Practice a bedtime routine that helps you relax, let go of the day and the events that came with it₁
- Don't take your problems to bed, leave them behind with the day you are finishing by opting to write down your concerns/stresses (e.g. journal entry) before bed₃
- Get into your sleeping position, if you don't fall asleep within 15 - 30 minutes , get up and go to other room and stay there until sleepy - try reading₃

REFERENCES

1. Thorpy M. Sleep Hygiene. Sleep Matters Spring 2003. <http://sleepfoundation.org/ask-the-expert/sleep-hygiene>
2. Gehrman P . 13 natural ways to fall asleep without sleeping pills. Everyday Health 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/11/natural-sleep-aids_n_3882229.html
3. Anonymous. Sleep Hygiene. University of Maryland Medical Center - Sleep Disorders Center 2013. <http://umm.edu/programs/sleep/patients/sleep-hygiene>

