



Tips for more sound sleep

1. Go bland before bedtime. To fall asleep quickly, avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol for at least four hours before you go to bed.
2. Be predictable. Go to bed around the same time every night, and try to follow a similar routine. Waking the same time every morning is also essential in keeping a regular sleep schedule.
3. Don't toss and turn. If you can't sleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something else until you feel sleepy again. Tossing and turning may cause more anxiety than relaxation.
4. Save the bed for sleep and sex. Avoid paying bills, reading the paper or watching TV in bed. It is important to correlate your bed with sleep, not stress.
5. Take a bath. Take a warm bath before bedtime to help your body relax. You may want to add lavender or other soothing oils into your bath water. Also, taking a bath can be more relaxing than a shower.
6. Exercise early. If you exercise, do it before dinner, not after. Exercising late at night can wake you up instead of help you to relax.
7. Make your room dark. People usually sleep best in a cool, dark environment. Hanging heavy drapes or wearing a sleep mask may help.
8. Grab a snack. It's hard to sleep hungry, so try a light snack before bedtime. Warm milk is thought to naturally induce sleep by releasing the natural hormone L-Triptaphan. Keep the meal light, because eating a large meal can cause restlessness.
9. Cut naps short. If you have trouble falling asleep, consider avoiding naps. At the very least, limit them to less than an hour before mid-afternoon.
10. Address your stress. If daytime troubles keep you awake, try jotting notes about ways to deal with them. Leave stress at the bedroom door, if possible.

This material provides a general overview of the topic. Health information is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a therapist, physician or other health care professional. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs.