

10 Steps to Better Sleep

If you're having trouble sleeping, you're not alone. More than three-fourths of people with Parkinson's disease report sleep-related symptoms. But getting plenty of deep, restorative sleep is vital to your health and energy level. In addition to getting a sleep evaluation, here are 10 steps you can take to ensure a good night's sleep.

- 1. Create a serene sleeping area.** Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet. Replace worn out mattresses and pillows. Don't eat, read or watch TV in bed.
- 2. Set a sleep schedule.** Rise and retire at the same time every day, regardless of sleep difficulties during the night. Limit naps, which can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- 3. Don't toss and turn.** If you're unable to sleep after 15 minutes, or if you wake up in the middle of the night, get out of bed and do something monotonous such as reading or listening to soft music until sleepiness returns.
- 4. Review your medications.** Prescription drugs can affect your sleep. Write down every drug you take, including over-the-counter ones, and have your doctor evaluate how they may be disrupting your slumber.
- 5. Cut caffeine, especially late in the day.** It's no secret that caffeine is a stimulant. But it's also a diuretic that can prompt frequent trips to the bathroom.
- 6. Reschedule dinner.** Eating large meals too close to bedtime may make it hard to drop off or stay asleep.
- 7. Stay active.** Vigorous physical activity promotes deep sleep. Try to build at least 30 minutes of exercise into your day.
- 8. Write down your worries.** Ongoing psychological and emotional distress can disrupt your sleep. To soothe your nerves, set aside 15 minutes a day to write or think about what's troubling you.
- 9. Try light therapy.** Getting several hours of light exposure each day, particularly natural morning light, may help reset your body's internal clock.
- 10. Keep a sleep journal.** Jot down what you try and how well you sleep. Review after two weeks to see what worked.

To learn more about sleep issues in Parkinson's, visit www.parkinson.org/sleep.



Complementary Therapies Can Help

Some complementary therapies may help improve quality of sleep and ease symptoms in people with PD. Here are the top ones to discuss with your doctor. If you want to pursue a therapy, be sure to see a skilled and qualified practitioner. (For information on licensing, certification and therapies, visit the website of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health, www.nccam.nih.gov, or call them at 1-888-644-6226.)

- **Acupuncture.** A procedure that involves the painless insertion of fine needles into various points on the body to treat a wide range of physical and mental conditions. One benefit of this treatment is greater relaxation.
- **Massage.** A targeted touch technique that can relieve anxiety, headaches, muscle stiffness, joint pain and more.
- **Yoga and Meditation.** These stress-reducing practices promote greater calmness and physical relaxation.