

Tips For A Good Night's Sleep – Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is the habits that promote better quality sleep. Just as you brush your teeth and floss to maintain good dental hygiene, there are things you can do to improve nighttime sleep and daytime alertness.

Set a schedule: Going to bed and getting up at the same time helps set good sleep-wake rhythms.

Limit naps: Daytime naps may make it hard to fall asleep and stay asleep at night. But not all naps are bad: studies have shown that short naps (lasting 15–20 minutes) may improve mood, alertness and performance on activities of daily living and other tasks.

Spend time in natural light: Light helps set our internal clock. Studies have linked daytime exposure to natural light with sounder sleep.

Exercise: Regular physical exercise promotes good sleep. However, give yourself a few hours between your workout time and bedtime to allow your body temperature, heart rate and adrenaline levels to lower.

Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol: Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and may cause insomnia. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but as it is metabolized, "rebound insomnia" can appear, interrupting sleep.

Relax: Establish a relaxing routine before bedtime. Anxiety is one of the main culprits of insomnia, and relaxation rituals – like listening to music or taking a warm bath – can help you settle down.

Regulate bedroom temperature: Cooler is better for sleep. A lower core body temperature signals sleep. But try to avoid temperature extremes in your sleeping environment. Environments that are too cold or too warm are not conducive to good sleep.

Get into bed only when you are sleepy, and don't lie in bed awake: If you can't sleep, get out of bed and do an activity until you feel tired. Read a book, do a puzzle, play solitaire – avoid artificial light from screens like a TV, smartphone or computer.

Seek help as needed: Timely and accurate diagnosis of a sleep disorder is important not only for good sleep but for your overall health. Talk to your healthcare provider if you do not have restful sleep.

It can also be helpful to keep a sleep journal, so you can recognize patterns and share it with your doctor if needed. Together you can identify things that aid sleep and habits that can be improved for better sleep.

Tip sheet taken from *Psychosis*. Find *Psychosis* and more publications at Parkinson.org/Library, or call the Parkinson's Foundation Helpline at 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636).