

Sleep Hygiene Handout

1. **Set a regular sleep scheduled:** Decide on a reasonable time to go to bed and a reasonable time to get up. Remember most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep with 8 being considered ideal. (TED Talk: "Sleep is your Super Power" Matthew Walker (19 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MuIMqhT8DM>
2. **Make your bedroom comfortable for sleep:**
 - Room should be DARK: free of all lights if possible: windows, computers, phone placed on dark mode, etc.
 - Room should be COOL: 65 degrees is recommended for sleep
 - Quiet or Consistent Noise – fan, air purifier, white noise. (Whatever is best for you.)
 - Eye masks and ear plugs may also be helpful.
 - Animals in your bed or moving about in your room may also interfere with restful sleep. Moving them to another room may increase your quality of sleep.
3. **Use your bed for sleep (and intimacy) only:** If your body learns to associate your bed with sleep, you'll start to feel tired as soon as you lie down.
4. **Turn off electronics:** Using your phone/iPad/computer, watching TV, or doing other waking activities in bed can have the opposite effect, causing you to become more alert and interfere with going to sleep. Turn off all electronics to sleep mode and darken screen so only alarms will sound.
5. **Avoid or limit napping to no more than 20-30 minutes per day.** Naps that are over an hour long or later in the day are especially harmful to quality sleep.
6. **Avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.**
 - Caffeine – can stay in your body for up to 12 hours so be careful of use after 12:00-Noon.
 - Alcohol and many mood altering substance interfere with REM Sleep.
 - Nicotine is a stimulant so may interfere with going to sleep, and withdrawal may interfere with restful morning sleep.
7. **Exercise:** 25 minutes per day can improve your health and the quality of your sleep. Avoid strenuous exercise two hours before bedtime.
8. **Eating well:** a healthy diet contributes to balance and rest. Avoid eating two hours before bedtime. Elevating your bed improves digestion for those who have issues.
9. **Journaling:** keeping a journal beside your bed to write down lists of things that come to mind and keep you awake, thoughts that may need to be processed at another time, mind racing things that if you commit to paper may lesson, and dreams that you would like to remember and process at a later date, etc. All of these and more can contribute to improved mental health.
10. **If your mind tends to wander or race when you lay down:** try listening to "Relaxing Melodies" or Deep or Progressive Breathing" app or something similar – however with the phone below your bed so the light is not distracting.