

## Tips for Better Sleep

### What Is Good Sleep?

- There is **no universal standard** for good sleep.
- Good sleep is the kind that allows you to **recover and feel refreshed during the day**.
- **Consult a healthcare professional** if you experience **heavy snoring, sleep apnea, nighttime pain, an irresistible urge to move your arms or legs during the night (Restless Legs Syndrome), sleepwalking**, or if the measures below prove ineffective.

### Rule #1: Regularity

- Keep **regular bedtime and wake-up times**. The **wake-up time naturally determines the bedtime**. Your body needs to **accumulate a certain level of fatigue** to initiate sleep.
- **Limit time shifts and sleep compensation** (e.g., sleeping in, long or late naps), even on weekends.

### Preparing for Sleep

- Avoid **screens close to the eyes** (phone, tablet) one hour before bedtime.
- Avoid **coffee, tea, caffeine, and nicotine** in the **4 to 6 hours before sleeping**.
- **Limit alcohol** in the evening: it may help you fall asleep but **disrupts sleep quality**.
- Avoid **heavy meals** before going to bed.
- Engage in a **relaxing activity** at least an hour before bedtime: reading, soft music, breathing exercises, meditation.
- Avoid activities that **stimulate the brain**: work, social media, video games, intense thinking.
- If you tend to **ruminate**, write down your concerns in a notebook to avoid dwelling on them in bed. **Plan the next day in advance** to clear your mind. If anxiety is significant, do not hesitate to consult a **psychologist**.

### Sleep Environment

- Favor a **quiet, dark, and cool room** (between 18 and 20°C / 64–68°F).
- Reserve the **bed for sleep and intimacy only**. No reading, eating, or screen use in bed.
- **Disconnect once in bed** (no phone, tablet, or computer).
- **Avoid checking the time at night** (keep the alarm clock out of sight).
- **Reduce noise** (use earplugs if needed) and **block light sources** (e.g., LED indicators from chargers).

### Daytime Habits for Better Night Sleep

- Get **exposed to natural daylight** as much as possible during the day, and **limit bright lights** in the evening.
- Engage in **regular physical activity**, but **avoid late evening exercise**.
- **Eat meals at consistent times**.



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### What About Sleeping Pills?

- **Avoid if possible.** Long-term side effects include **addiction, falls, memory problems, and poor sleep quality.**
- Consider them only **as a last resort**, for **short-term use only**, in cases of **transient insomnia. Avoid** in cases of **chronic insomnia.**
- **Alternatives:** herbal teas or supplements with **valerian, lemon balm, orange blossom, or chamomile.**

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### Behavioral Method: “Stimulus Control”

- **Use the bed only for sleep and intimacy.** Do not read, eat, or use screens in bed.
- **Go to bed only when sleepy**, and only to sleep.
- If you don't fall asleep **within 20 minutes**, get up, go to another room, and return to bed **only when sleepiness returns.** Repeat as often as needed.
- **Wake up at the same time every day**, even after a bad night.
- Avoid napping during the day (or take only very brief naps, far from bedtime).
- This method is **effective and long-lasting**, often **as effective as sleeping pills**, without the side effects.

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### Sleep Restriction Technique

**To be discussed in advance with a doctor.** Suitable in cases of **frequent nighttime awakenings or excessive time spent in bed (8–10 hours):**

- Set a **fixed wake-up time**, and keep it consistent every day.
- **Delay your bedtime on purpose** to reduce total time in bed.
- **Naps are not allowed.**
- Keep a **sleep diary** (or use a smartwatch).
- **Calculate your sleep efficiency** = (estimated sleep time ÷ time spent in bed) × 100.
  - If **>85% after 7–10 days**: you may **advance bedtime by 15 minutes** (e.g., from 12:00 a.m. to 11:45 p.m.), while keeping wake-up time fixed.
  - If **<80% after 7–10 days**: **further delay bedtime by 15 minutes** (e.g., from 12:00 a.m. to 12:15 a.m.), but **never reduce total time in bed below 5 hours.**

### Benefits:

- **Faster sleep onset, fewer nighttime awakenings, better sleep efficiency.**
- Total sleep duration gain is **modest**, and **effects on sleep quality remain insufficiently measured.**

### Possible side effects:

- **Daytime sleepiness** during the initial phase
- **Reduced emotional regulation, fatigue-induced anxiety**
- Risk of **triggering seizures** in individuals with epilepsy

