



Sleep Habits Checklist

Use this checklist to improve your “sleep hygiene” so that you maximize the healing potential of your body and enjoy lasting energy throughout the day.

- ☐ **Most important sleep hygiene measure:** Maintain a regular wake and sleep pattern seven days a week.
- ☐ **Spend an appropriate amount of time in bed** -- not too little or too excessive. The right amount of time may vary by individual. For example, if someone has a problem with daytime sleepiness, they should spend a minimum of eight hours in bed; if someone has difficulty sleeping at night, they should limit themselves to 7 hours in bed in order to keep the sleep pattern consolidated.
- ☐ **Avoid napping** during the day. It can disturb the normal pattern of sleep and wakefulness.
- ☐ **Avoid stimulants** such as caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol too close to bedtime. While alcohol is well known to speed the onset of sleep, it disrupts sleep in the second half as the body begins to metabolize the alcohol, causing arousal.
- ☐ **Exercise can promote good sleep.** Vigorous exercise should be taken in the morning or late afternoon. A relaxing exercise, like yoga, can be done before bed to help initiate a restful night's sleep.
- ☐ **Food can be disruptive** right before sleep. Stay away from large meals close to bedtime. Also dietary changes can cause sleep problems. If you are struggling with a sleep problem, it's not a good time to start experimenting with spicy dishes. And, remember, chocolate has caffeine.
- ☐ **Ensure adequate exposure to natural light.** This is particularly important if you may not venture outside as frequently as you should. Light exposure helps maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
- ☐ **Establish a regular relaxing bedtime routine.** Try to avoid emotionally upsetting conversations and activities before trying to go to sleep. Don't dwell on problems, or at least don't bring them to bed.
- ☐ **Associate your bed with sleep.** It's not a good idea to use your bed to watch TV, listen to the radio, spend time on your smartphone, or read.
- ☐ **Create a pleasant and relaxing sleep environment.** Your bed should be comfortable and your room should not be too hot, too cold, or too bright.