

7 Habits That Can

Improve Your Sleep



Remember a time when you actually felt rested?

You probably know that getting enough sleep is important for good health. But are you getting enough of it? And is your sleep as restorative as it could be? **These tips may help you improve the quality of your sleep.**

- 1 Consider the cost of caffeine**

Skimping on shut-eye may lead to reaching for coffee and other sources of caffeine. But overconsuming caffeine can keep you awake at night, resulting in an even greater sleep deficit. Aim to avoid caffeine after noon—it can stay in your body for hours.
- 2 Have some quiet time**

Rearrange your activities so things get progressively quieter as bedtime approaches. Avoid tackling stressful tasks in the hour or two before bedtime. Instead, switch to relaxing activities such as reading a novel or journaling about your day. And keep work and screens out of your bedroom. Make your bedroom a place you go to relax and unwind.
- 3 Cut back on alcohol**

Alcohol can disrupt sleep. Avoid drinking alcohol in the few hours before bed. While alcohol may initially make you sleepy, it can also impair your breathing during sleep and hamper your body's ability to enter deep sleep. When it wears off after a few hours, it may also cause you to wake up and toss and turn.
- 4 Go through the motions**

Even if you don't feel sleepy, getting ready—washing your face, putting on your pajamas, setting the alarm clock, lowering the lights, fluffing the bedclothes—an hour before bedtime may help put you in the mind-set for sleep. And aim for a consistent bedtime every night.
- 5 Keep your cool**

Cozy pajamas may be comfortable when you first crawl into bed, but sometimes they keep you too warm to sleep well. For more restful sleep, consider wearing something light, set the thermostat a few degrees cooler and use a fan to keep air circulating.
- 6 Draw the curtains**

No matter what time you go to bed, sunlight streaming through the window can wake you up. Installing blackout drapes may help you squeeze a little more sleep out of the morning, especially on weekends.
- 7 Quit the snooze button**

Hitting the snooze button so the alarm goes off repeatedly in the morning doesn't buy you much high-quality sleep. Make the most of your time in bed by setting the alarm for the latest time possible—and get up when it goes off. If you must use the snooze alarm, hit it only once.