



SCALE BACK ON UNHEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

Sleep Smart! The amount of sleep you get is directly related to your overall health. Short sleep periods (<7 hours per night) are linked to an increase in obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, and frequent mental distress. Many people do not get an adequate amount of sleep which is 7 or more hours per night for an adult.

Sleep can help your efforts to be healthier by:

- 1. Improving your physical activity.**
- 2. Supporting you in fighting cravings and making healthy food choices.**
- 3. Helping prevent insulin resistance.**

Tips to Get a Healthy Night's Sleep

The Sleepfoundation.org defined Sleep Hygiene as a "concept of adopting certain daytime and nighttime habits to improve your sleep." They also offered the following sleep hygiene tips for better sleep:

1. Create the Right Bedroom Environment

To help you more easily drift off to sleep your bedroom should be dark, cool, and quiet. Also, avoid associating your bed with work or other stimuli; it should be set aside for sleeping only. Finally, invest in a quality mattress, pillows, or bedding to increase your comfort.

2. Stick to Your Schedule

Wake up and go to bed at about the same time each day. If possible, don't skimp on sleep. Try to catch up on missed sleep by sleeping in on weekends or taking a short nap in the early afternoon to make up for your sleep debt. Finally, and probably the most difficult, try to wake up the first time your alarm goes off instead of hitting snooze.

3. Limit Technology

Using electronics just before sleep can fill your mind with information and run away thoughts that will keep you awake. Also, blue screens found on computers and phones have a rousing effect. Therefore, sleep experts recommend turning off your devices an hour before bed and don't forget to silence all notifications.

4. Exercise and Eat Well

Exercise should be a part of your daily routine to remain healthy. However, physical activity that's done too late in the day can lead to excitability at bedtime. Also, you should avoid eating big meals too close to bedtime to make time for proper digestion. Finally, reduce your alcohol and caffeine intake because they may disrupt your sleep.

5. Relax

Try to reduce stress by practicing yoga, meditation, or other relaxation techniques. Try a soothing bedtime routine that makes you sleepy such as reading a book, taking a bath, playing soft music, and putting on comfy pajamas.

6. Use Sleep Aids with Caution

Only use sleep aids as a last resort. Melatonin, sleeping pills, CBD oil, and other sleep aids have been used successfully by many people. However, they could have you feeling groggy the next day and positive sleep effects may diminish over time. They should only be used as a last resort and under the advisement of a health professional.

As you continue your journey of scaling back on unhealthy habits, getting enough restful sleep will help you be better prepared to accomplish your health and wellness goals.

INCLUSION MATTERS: Individuals with a disability sometimes have a hard time with sleep and often experience secondary conditions such as chronic pain, mood disorders like anxiety and depression, and obesity. These conditions can interfere with sleep and sometimes be caused by lack of sleep. Another common problem for people with certain disabilities is sleep apnea.

Here are some tips for a better night's sleep for individuals with disabilities:

- Go to bed at the same time every night and follow a routine.
- Before bedtime "power down". This includes having TV, smart phones, laptops, tablets or other electronic devices turned off. Light from the screens of these devices can trick the brain into stopping the production of melatonin, a hormone essential for getting to sleep.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and sugar for at least five hours

before bedtime.

- Avoid eating prior to sleep to allow time to digest, but also do not go to bed hungry, as this can also wake you from sleep.
- Do not exercise within two hours of bedtime. Stretching, meditation, or a warm bath before bed may help you get to sleep.
- Keep stress out of the bedroom. For example, do not work or pay bills there. Keep your bedroom quiet, dark and free from extreme temperatures.
- If you're not asleep in 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing or boring until you feel sleepy.
- During the day, get regular exercise, and sunlight exposure.

Resources: nchpad.org/1582/6597/Taking-Your-Vitamin-ZZZ

FAMILY MATTERS: How much sleep is your child getting? School age children need about 9 hours per night and teenagers only need between 7-8 hours per night. Routine is the key! Set up a routine that prepares them for rest... dim the lights, put on pajamas, brush your teeth, read a book. Establishing a consistent bedtime routine that works for you and your kids will help them learn to love bedtime.

LINKS: **What makes a good night's sleep:** <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/what-makes-good-night-sleep>
7 ways sleep can help you lose weight: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/sleep-and-weight-loss>