

Breathlessness Support Service

Good sleep hygiene

Sleep hygiene is a term used to describe good sleep habits. If you have trouble sleeping, we have some suggestions to help you get a better night's sleep.

Helpful tips

Go to bed at the **same time** each night.

- Get up from bed at the **same time** each day and try to avoid 'lying in'. This helps to keep your body clock synchronised to a regular routine.
- Get **regular exercise** each day, preferably in the morning. There is evidence that this improves restful sleep.
- Get regular **exposure to outdoor or bright lights**, especially in the late afternoon. Light is important for the body as it produces melatonin, which promotes sleep.
- Keep the **temperature** in your bedroom comfortable.
- Keep the bedroom **dark** enough to facilitate sleep.
- Keep the bedroom **quiet** – try thicker curtains, sleeping at the back of your house or ear plugs to avoid being woken by noise.
- Use a **relaxation** exercise just before going to sleep, or a relaxation tape.
- Try muscle relaxation to help yourself unwind, such as a **warm bath** or a massage.
- Keep your feet and hands **warm**. Try wearing warm socks and/or mittens or gloves in bed.
- If you lie in bed awake for more than 20-30 minutes, **get up**, go to a different room (or different part of the bedroom), then return to bed when you feel sleepy. Do this as many times as needed during the night.

Things to avoid

- Taking exercise **just before going to bed**. This stimulates the body and can make it difficult to sleep.
- Taking caffeine in the evening (coffee, tea, chocolate, etc.). Caffeine is a stimulant and can make it difficult to sleep.
- Taking alcohol in the evening or using alcohol to sleep. It has been shown that it can result in broken sleep and cause you to wake up early.
- **Smoking** before going to bed. Nicotine is a stimulant and will keep you awake.
- Reading or watching **television** in bed.

- Going to bed **too hungry** or **too full**.
- Taking excessive **daytime naps** or **dozing off** in front of the TV in the evening.
- Poor sleep hygiene.

Acknowledgement

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