



10 TIPS TO SLEEP WELL



Sleeping well helps you feel more focused and energized throughout the day. Research finds that healthy sleep habits are linked to better physical and mental health, improved mood, and lower stress, especially in older adults. The good news? Small daily habits can help you sleep more soundly. These evidence-based tips are based on a review of academic research.

1 KEEP A CONSISTENT SCHEDULE

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule is associated with better ability to fall asleep, greater continuity of sleep, and better daytime functioning.

2 GET MORNING LIGHT

Expose yourself to natural light in the morning to set your internal clock. Morning light is a strong circadian “time cue” that advances your circadian phases and improves alignment between your biological night and desired bedtime.

3 DIM THE LIGHTS AT NIGHT

Lower lights and avoid screens at least one hour before bedtime. Bright, short-wavelength (blue-enriched) light in the evening can suppress melatonin and delay circadian timing, which is linked to difficulty falling and staying asleep.

4 RESERVE YOUR BEDROOM FOR SLEEP

Use your bed for sleep and relaxing only. Research shows that limiting wakeful, attention-demanding activities (such as watching TV) in bed strengthens the learned association between being in bed and getting good sleep.

5 WATCH YOUR CAFFEINE

Try to skip caffeine after early afternoon; it tends to linger for hours. Caffeine can delay sleep onset and reduce sleep depth, with effects that may persist for 6+ hours depending on dose and individual metabolism.

6 MOVE YOUR BODY

Regular daytime exercise improves sleep, but try to finish workouts a few hours before bed. Evidence links regular physical activity to longer total sleep time and better sleep efficiency, while vigorous late-evening exercise can have the opposite effect.

7 CREATE A WIND-DOWN ROUTINE

Do the same calming activities each night to signal your brain that it’s time to sleep. Pre-sleep relaxation practices are supported by behavioral sleep research and can reduce cognitive and physiological arousal.

8 KEEP IT COOL, DARK, AND QUIET

A cooler, darker, quieter bedroom supports deeper sleep. Sleep studies show that lower ambient temperature facilitates the normal drop in core body temperature, and minimizing light/noise reduces micro-arousals that can disrupt sleep.

9 SKIP THE NIGHTCAP

Alcohol may make you sleepy, but it disrupts sleep later in the night. Research shows alcohol can suppress REM sleep while it is metabolized, which may in turn lead to poor sleep quality.

10 GET UP IF YOU CAN'T SLEEP

If you’re still awake after about 20 minutes, try going into another room and doing something relaxing like reading a book or listening to music. Moving rooms can help prevent you from forming an association between being in bed and prolonged wakefulness.

Mather Institute, an area of service of Mather, developed these tips based on a review of academic research. Mather is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of older adults by creating Ways to Age Well. Staffed by nationally recognized researchers, the Institute is an award-winning resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living, and successful aging service innovations.