

Sleep Hygiene

What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is a variety of different practices that are necessary to have normal, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness.



Why is it important to practice good sleep hygiene? How will good sleep help my pain?

- Sleep hygiene is important for everyone, from childhood through adulthood.
- A good sleep hygiene routine promotes healthy sleep and daytime alertness.
- Good sleep hygiene practices can prevent the development of sleep problems and disorders.
- Poor sleep has been linked to chronic pain. Improving your sleep may help reduce your pain.

Try not to nap during the day. It can interfere with 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 of the sleep cycle as the body begins to metabolize the alcohol.

Exercise can promote good sleep. Demanding exercise should be done in the morning or late afternoon. A relaxing exercise, like deep breathing or walking, can be done before bed to help with a restful night's sleep.

Food can be disruptive right before sleep. Stay away from large meals close to bedtime. Dietary changes can cause sleep problems. If someone is having difficulty sleeping, it is not a good time to start experimenting with spicy dishes before bed. And, remember, chocolate contains caffeine.

Make sure you have enough exposure to natural sunlight. This is important for older people who may not venture outside as frequently as children and adults. Light exposure helps keep a healthy sleep-wake cycle.

Start a regular relaxing bedtime routine. Try to avoid emotionally upsetting conversations and activities before trying to go to sleep. Don't dwell on or bring your problems to bed.

Associate your bed with sleep. It's not a good idea to use your bed to watch TV, listen to the radio or read.

Make sure that the sleep environment is pleasant and relaxing. The bed should be comfortable, the room should not be too hot or cold, or too bright.



How does someone know if his or her sleep hygiene is poor?

Sleep disturbances and daytime sleepiness are the most telling signs of poor sleep hygiene. If one is experiencing a sleep problem, he or she should evaluate their sleep routine. It may take some time for the changes to have a positive effect.

How do I know what the best sleep hygiene routine is for me?

If you're taking too long to fall asleep, or awakening during the night, you should consider changing your bedtime habits. The most important thing for you is to maintain a regular sleep-wake schedule throughout the week and consider how much time you spend in bed.

