

How to Get a Better Night's Sleep for Good Health

Four tips to improve your sleep habits

Are you tired of tossing and turning in bed, night after night, desperately seeking a good night's sleep? If so, you're not alone.

One-third of adults in the United States consistently fall short of the recommended amount of sleep. That would be [seven or more hours](#) per night.

Sleep deprivation can affect both your immediate well-being and long-term health. This is especially true if you have chronic insomnia or another untreated sleep disorder that keeps you from getting the amount and quality of sleep that you need for good health.

"As difficult as insomnia can be by itself, ongoing sleep deprivation can lead to other significant health problems," says [Derek Loewy, PhD](#), a clinical psychologist and [sleep medicine](#) specialist at [Scripps Clinic](#).

Sleep problems can raise the risk of chronic conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity and depression. Lack of sleep can also seep into your daily life. It can become a catalyst for vehicle accidents and mishaps at work.

So, if you've ever found yourself staring at the ceiling in the wee hours, longing for the sweet embrace of a good night's sleep, consider making some changes.

Dr. Loewy offers four tips to improve your sleep:

1. Maintain a healthy sleeping environment

- Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.
- Don't use electronic devices in bed.
- Reserve your bed for sleep and sex.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and large meals close to bedtime.
- Go to bed only when you are genuinely sleepy and can fall asleep faster.

2. Clear your mind of things keeping you up at night

- Identify and resolve issues, such as work, finances or family problems.
- Seek medical help if you have anxiety or depression.

3. Take advantage of the body's internal clock

- Understand your circadian rhythm or internal body clock.
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Get at least an hour of exposure to outdoor light every day.
- Don't let things like [daylight saving time](#) disrupt your sleep pattern; make adjustments.

4. Prepare your body for sleep

- Practice relaxation techniques, such as yoga, before bedtime.
- Work out in the morning or afternoon to promote sleep later.
- Avoid exercise just before bedtime as it may make sleep more difficult.
- Avoid caffeine after mid-afternoon and limit alcohol in the evening.

It's important to practice good sleeping habits. Changing the bad ones may be the answer to a better night's sleep.

If you think you have a [sleep disorder](#), consult with your doctor or a sleep medicine specialist.