

THESE WILL PUT YOU TO SLEEP

Sleep Hygiene Tips



- ✓ Maintain a regular sleep schedule: go to bed and get up as close to the same time every day as you can, even on weekends. By doing this you condition yourself to become sleepy at your designated bedtime.



- ✓ Alcohol, nicotine, cannabis and other substances interfere with your quality of sleep. Discontinue caffeine use after 4:00PM or earlier.



- ✓ Reserve the bed only for sleep and sex. Do all other work and activities elsewhere. Develop a comforting bedtime routine (warm shower/bath, tea, essential oils, meditation, reading).
- ✓ Make your bed as comfortable, calming and safe as possible. Use linen sheets that are soft and disperse body heat, spray lavender on sheets for relaxation.



- ✓ Have anxiety? Consider a weighted blanket that has weights sewn into the fabric. This creates a comforting feeling that simulates being hugged or held. Make your own or buy one online.



- ✓ Create a good sleeping environment: use soft restful colors in the bedroom and dark shades, use ear plugs, a fan, or a sound machine if noise is a problem



- ✓ Minimize external stimuli: Playing music, having the TV on, or bright lights can make it difficult to go to sleep. Reduce your exposure to stimuli.



- ✓ Exercise regularly: Exercising 20 or more minutes per day can help you fall asleep faster and improve sleep. However, avoid exercising within 3 hours of when you go to sleep as exercise can wake you up by increasing your alertness

- ✓ Nap carefully: Naps can interfere with sleep, so if you nap, keep them under 30 minutes and before 5pm

Try a sleep App: There are a number of free apps you can try to help with sleep.



- ✓ **Pzizz** (free music and meditations for sleep, naps and focus) <https://pzizz.com/>



- ✓ **Insight Timer** (sleep music, sleep tales, meditations, etc) <https://insighttimer.com/>

Getting back to sleep



- ✓ As soon as you notice you are awake, try to get back to sleep immediately. This is not a time to ponder, plan, ruminate or rehearse.



- ✓ If you cannot fall asleep within ½ hour, get out of bed, leave the room and read, sit or engage in some other quiet activity (low lights; no phone/tv) for a bit then try to go to sleep again.

- ✓ Stay physically drowsy. If you move at all, move only once, gently so as not to wake yourself.



- ✓ Having lots of thoughts? Keep a journal or paper by your bed and write the things down that are on your mind or that you may be worried about. This can help move them out of your mind without having to “solve” them immediately.

How to Better Control Intrusive Thoughts



Often what gets in the way of sleep are intrusive thoughts – worrying or planning or anticipating or rehearsing.

- ✓ Commit yourself to letting go of all such thoughts
- ✓ Convince yourself that even if the cure for Cancer suddenly comes to you, you must let it go while in bed
- ✓ *Cheerlead yourself: "Everything is as it should be now. There is no need for me to lie awake thinking. I can simply go to sleep."*

Set aside a quiet time just before bed, outside your bedroom, to do your worrying, planning, etc.



- ✓ Jot down any notes on thoughts or ideas you want to follow-up on. Do not dwell on any one thought or idea – merely jot something down and put the idea aside.

Block intrusive thoughts while you are in bed by doing the following:



- ✓ Immediately **start saying the word "the" over and over, under your breath**, with only the slightest movement of your tongue each time you say the word "the."
- ✓ Repeat "the" at a comfortable rate, 2 or 3 times per second.
- ✓ **IF you also have intrusive images, try moving your eyes as if you were following an irregular circle.** Keep your eyes closed, and follow the circle in a slow and lazy way. Try picturing a map of the United States and slowly move your eyes around the borders.
- ✓ If a thought intrudes, notice it nonjudgmentally and simply return to repeating "the" and following the circle. The unwanted thoughts will be blocked and you will soon drift off to sleep again.