

Five tips for a better night's sleep

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There's nothing like a good night's sleep to get you going in the morning. Drexel's Dr. Joanne Getsy offers some tips to jump start your body and mind.

Establish a schedule

Try to keep to the same bedtime and wake-up time as much as possible. That doesn't mean you can never change your schedule, but if you are having [trouble sleeping](#), it's important to train your brain to sleep when it's supposed to sleep and wake when you want it to. So, if you are having trouble going to sleep or getting up in the morning, pick a schedule and stick to it.

Avoid light

Light wakes up your brain, so it is wonderful in the morning (or whenever you want to wake up). But any kind of light during your sleep period will prevent you from falling asleep. This includes television, computers and cell phones. Shut off all the lights and the electronic devices and sleep in a dark room. If you need a little light, use a small [night](#) light far away from your bed. Don't be tempted to watch TV or log onto the computer during the night. It will prevent you from sleeping. Keep the light for the morning.

Create your own "lullaby"

Remember when you were young and you would have a bath and read a story before bed? That helped you unwind and get ready to go to sleep. If you are having trouble falling asleep, try doing something similar now. Give yourself some time to relax and get ready for bed. Try a warm bath, read a book or listen to relaxing music—anything that you find soothing. You need time to wind down from your busy day for your brain to be able to sleep.

Don't rely on sleeping pills

There is no sleeping pill that will give you the kind of sleep you can get on your own, and sleeping pills can (in some cases) be dangerous. They are usually fine for short-term use, although you should always talk to your doctor, even when considering over-the-counter medications. It is healthier for you to learn to sleep on your own. If you find that you can't get off a medication you are already taking, ask your doctor to refer you to a sleep specialist. No sleep is as good as natural, non-medicated sleep!

Naps are both good and bad

For people who have time to sleep at night, naps are bad. The more they nap during the day, the less they sleep at night. This happens to people who have bad sleep habits, such as people who stay up late watching TV, then nap in the afternoon. Go to bed at a reasonable time, get up in the morning, and get going! For people who can't get a solid block of [sleep](#) at night, such as shift workers, a short nap can help you get through the day. Elderly people sometimes nap in the afternoon because they often have trouble sleeping at night. This is a normal change of aging, but you should talk to your doctor if you are older and having trouble sleeping.

Provided by Drexel University

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