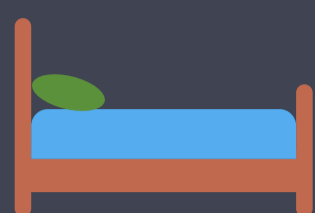


6 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP



These evidence-based tips aim to improve your sleep. For more tips visit: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/17-tips-to-sleep-better#The-bottom-line>

INCREASE BRIGHT LIGHT EXPOSURE DURING THE DAY

YOUR BODY HAS A NATURAL TIME-KEEPING CLOCK KNOWN AS YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM. THIS AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN, BODY AND HORMONES, AND TELLS YOU WHEN IT IS TIME TO SLEEP. IT IS FOUND THAT BOTH NATURAL LIGHT AND BRIGHT LIGHT KEEP THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM HEALTHY AND CAN IMPROVE SLEEP QUALITY AND DURATION. A WAY TO ENSURE GETTING YOUR DAILY DOSE OF LIGHT IS GETTING OUTSIDE, OR PURCHASE A BRIGHT LIGHT DEVICE.



REDUCE BLUE LIGHT EXPOSURE IN THE EVENING



- BLUE LIGHT IS EMITTED IN LARGE AMOUNTS FROM ELECTRONIC DEVICES SUCH AS SMART PHONES AND COMPUTERS.
- BLUE LIGHT TRICKS THE BRAIN INTO THINKING IT IS STILL DAY TIME.
- TO REDUCE YOUR BLUE LIGHT EXPOSURE TRY WEARING BLUE LIGHT BLOCKING GLASSES, DOWNLOAD ONE OF THE MANY APPLICATIONS TO BLOCK BLUE LIGHT ON YOUR PHONE OR COMPUTER, AND TURN OFF LIGHTS AND ELECTRONICS 2 HOURS BEFORE BED TIME.

DO NOT CONSUME CAFFEINE LATE IN THE DAY

CONSUMING CAFFEINE LATE IN THE DAY STIMULATES THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AND MAY STOP YOUR BODY FROM NATURALLY RELAXING AT NIGHT. IN FACT, CAFFEINE CAN STAY ELEVATED IN YOUR BLOOD FOR 6-8 HOURS. IF YOU HAVE A CAFFEINE CRAVING IT IS BEST TO STICK TO DECAF.



TRY TO SLEEP AND WAKE UP AT CONSISTENT TIMES FINDING A CONSISTENT SLEEP AND WAKE UP PATTERN CAN AID LONG-TERM SLEEP QUALITY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ON WEEKENDS WHEN YOU MAY HAVE MORE FREE TIME TO POSSIBLY SLEEP. STUDIES HAVE FOUND THAT IRREGULAR SLEEP PATTERNS CAN ALTER YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM AND LEVELS OF MELATONIN, WHICH SIGNALS THE BRAIN TO SLEEP.



RELAX AND CLEAR YOUR MIND IN THE EVENING

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES HAVE SHOWN TO IMPROVE SLEEP QUALITY. SEVERAL OF THESE INCLUDE:

- LISTEN TO RELAXING MUSIC
- READ A BOOK
- TAKE A BATH
- MEDITATE
- PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING
- VISUALIZATION



EXERCISE REGULARLY- BUT NOT BEFORE BED

EXERCISE IS ONE OF THE BEST SCIENCE-BASED WAYS TO IMPROVE SLEEP AND HEALTH. ONE STUDY FOUND THAT EXERCISE NEARLY HALVED THE TIME IT TOOK FOR PARTICIPANTS TO FALL ASLEEP. HOWEVER, DUE TO THE STIMULATORY EFFECTS OF EXERCISE, IT IS NOT RECOMMENDED TO EXERCISE LATE IN THE DAY AND CAN IN FACT CAUSE SLEEP PROBLEMS.



QUESTIONS? FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE GOUCHER COLLEGE STUDENT COUNSELING CENTER MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY FROM 9 AM TO 5 PM AT 410-337-6481, OR TO SPEAK WITH A LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR BY PHONE 24/7, CALL 855-236-4278.