

# Sleep Hygiene

## ☞ **Set a schedule.**

Establish a regular sleep schedule every day of the week. Don't sleep in more than an hour, even on your days off.

## ☞ **Don't force yourself to sleep.**

If you haven't fallen asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something calming. Read a book, draw, or write in a journal. Avoid computer, TV, and phone screens, or anything else that's stimulating and could lead to becoming *more* awake.

## ☞ **Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.**

Consuming caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine can affect your ability to fall asleep and the quality of your sleep, even if they're used earlier in the day. Remember, caffeine can stay in your body for up to 12 hours, and even decaf coffee has *some* caffeine!

## ☞ **Avoid napping.**

Napping during the day will make sleep more difficult at night. Naps that are over an hour long, or those that are later in the day, are especially harmful to sleep hygiene.

## ☞ **Use your bed only for sleep.**

If your body learns to associate your bed with sleep, you'll start to feel tired as soon as you lie down. Using your phone, watching TV, or doing other waking activities in bed can have the opposite effect, causing you to become more alert.

## ☞ **Exercise and eat well.**

A healthy diet and exercise can lead to better sleep. However, avoid strenuous exercise and big meals for 2 hours before going to bed.

## ☞ **Sleep in a comfortable environment.**

It's important to sleep in an area that's adequately quiet, comfortable, and dark. Try using an eye mask, ear plugs, fans, or white noise if necessary.