

Secrets to a Good Night's Sleep

Presented by

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If you are having sleep problems, whether you are not able to fall asleep, wake up too often, don't feel well-rested when you wake up in the morning, or simply want to improve the quality and quantity of your sleep, try as many of the following techniques as possible.

- **Avoid before-bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars.** This will raise blood sugar and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low (hypoglycemia), you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.
- **Sleep in complete darkness or as close as possible or wear an eye mask.** If there is even the tiniest bit of light in the room it can disrupt your circadian rhythm and your pineal gland's production of melatonin and serotonin. There also should be as little light in the bathroom as possible if you get up in the middle of the night. Keep the light off when you go to the bathroom at night.
- **No TV right before bed.** Even better, get the TV out of the bedroom or even out of the house, completely. It is too stimulating to the brain and it will take longer to fall asleep.
- **Wear socks to bed.** Due to the fact that they have the poorest circulation, the feet often feel cold before the rest of the body. Studies have shown that wearing socks reduces night wakings.
- **Read something spiritual or religious.** This will help to relax. If you often lay in bed with your mind racing, it might be helpful **keep a journal** and write down your thoughts before bed.
- **Keep your bed for sleeping.** If you are used to watching TV or doing work in bed, you may find it harder to relax and to think of the bed as a place to sleep.
- **Get to bed as early as possible.** Our systems, particularly the adrenals, do a majority of their recharging or recovering during the hours of 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. Prior to the widespread use of electricity, people would go to bed shortly after sundown, as most animals do, and which nature intended for human biorhythms as well.

- **Keep the temperature in the bedroom no higher than 70 degrees F.** Many people keep their homes and particularly the upstairs bedrooms too hot.
- **Eat a high-protein snack several hours before bed.** This can provide the L-tryptophan needed to produce melatonin and serotonin.
- **Also eat a small piece of fruit.** This can help the tryptophan cross the blood-brain barrier.
- **Reduce or avoid as many drugs as possible.** Many medications, both prescription and over-the-counter may have effects on sleep. Sleep meds are horrible for your body!
- **Avoid caffeine.** Even an afternoon cup of coffee (or tea) will keep some people from falling asleep hours later. Also, some medications, particularly diet pills contain caffeine. Also, **avoid alcohol** as this prevents you from going into deep sleep!
- **Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed.** When body temperature is raised in the late evening, it will fall at bedtime, facilitating sleep.
- **Avoid using loud alarm clocks.** It is very stressful on the body to be awoken suddenly. Also, be sure to **remove the clock from view.** It will only add to your worry when constantly staring at it... 2 a.m. ...3 a.m. ... 4:30 a.m. ...
- **Don't change your bedtime.** You should go to bed, and wake up, at the same times each day, even on the weekends. This will help your body to get into a sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep and get up in the morning.
- **Make certain you are exercising regularly.** Exercising for at least 30 minutes everyday can help you fall asleep. Studies also show being overweight can increase the risk of sleep apnea, which will prevent a restful night's sleep.
- **Go to the bathroom right before bed.** This will reduce the chances that you'll wake up to go in the middle of the night.
- **Get a Spine and nervous system checkup.** Many patients who suffer with sleeping difficulties (including sleep apnea) have great success with chiropractic care. Call today to find out how Dr. John Ferguson can help you get a good night's sleep!

