

Modern Health and Sleep

Tips from Modern Health Therapists



Sleep is reportedly the second top reason clients seek medical attention, internationally. You're not alone. We live in a world which is psychologically complex, cognitively demanding, and our workplace is often stationary. There are ways to prioritize your sleep health and thereby improve your overall health.

DR. PALAK KOTHARI, LICENSED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Deep restorative sleep is a vital ingredient to our heart health, gut health (i.e. regular bowel movements), and emotional health. More importantly, it helps regulate our circadian rhythm, or our 'biological clock,' so that we can remain cognitively alert, focused, and emotionally available to those around us.

Things that could be getting in the way of sleep

TIRED VS. SLEEPY

We often confuse feeling tired and feeling sleepy. Even with 8 hours of sleep, we could still feel tired due to fatigue, restlessness, or physical exhaustion. If you go to bed "tired," you may lay awake for hours by misreading of your sleep signals.

MISREAD SLEEP SIGNALS

Sleep signals indicate readiness for sleep induction. These include:

- Drowsiness
- Head nodding off to bed
- Heavy eyes
- Trouble keeping eyes open

ALCOHOL INTAKE

Many people may use alcohol to help with sleep onset; however, alcohol (even just 6oz of wine) causes sleep interruption. Alcohol has immunosuppressive ingredients present, which leads to reduced REM sleep and reduced deep, restorative sleep.

INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

Our anxious thoughts show up at night if we do not create space to acknowledge them during the day. It's also important to acknowledge our thoughts surrounding sleep. Depending on life experiences, it can be difficult to detach from automatic, negative thoughts about sleep.

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Strategies to get better sleep



The hope is to remind the body and mind that there was a time that you slept better, and that you can return to this healthy state of being.

ALI PSIUK, LICENSED MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST

The mind and body love rhythm and routine (as much as we can rebel against it). Sleep patterns are learned and can be unlearned, and sleep hygiene can absolutely be learned. Here are my tips for getting ready for bed to get quality sleep:

TIP #1:
Build a sleep
schedule with
consistency in mind

Behavioral sleep medicine researchers have found that the #1 ingredient to maintaining good sleep health & treating insomnia is keeping a consistent wake time every morning (including weekends). This means you wake up at the same time every morning to help build your sleep drive throughout the day.

TIP #2:
Reset through
routine

If you can, exposure to sunlight can help reset the circadian rhythm. If you can watch the sunset, it can also help trigger the brain reminding it that the day is now ending. Similarly, taking a bath/shower, focusing on bedtime hygiene, and preparing your room for sleep can signal to your body that you're getting ready for bed.

TIP #3:
Write your
thoughts in a
brain dump

Do a "brain dump" or "worry log" at night, where you write down streams of consciousness—energetically transfer and acknowledge your worries before bed without overwhelming your mind. Try attending to the worries that you can resolve that day. For those that are longer-term worries, put a date next for when you can acknowledge it.

TIP #4:
Optimize your
sleep environment

Condition your bed for sleep and sex **only**. Turn off your lights and technology 1 hour before bed with the intention of sleeping. Invest in a noise machine with a natural fan for noise interference. Lastly, studies show that sleeping in a slightly colder room helps to induce sleep given sleep is most likely to occur when our core body temperature decreases.

TIP #5:
Seek one-on-one
support

Talking through your unique sleep challenges with a qualified therapist may be needed if the usual tips and tricks are not working. It could be useful to meet with a sleep expert to determine your natural sleep and wake times aligned with your circadian clock.



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