

Sleep Hygiene

Better sleep for a better life

What is sleep hygiene...?

Sleep is necessity and not a luxury.

A good night's sleep is not synonymous with many hours of sleep. It is more important to get enough **quality sleep** each night.

For good sleep hygiene, you must follow a set of guidelines. So you will experience a good sleep quality which will make you feel rested the next day.

What is sleep hygiene:

- Behaviour and habits before bedtime
- Dinner and other meals in the evening
- Sport and physical activities
- Atmosphere in the bedroom

Behaviour and habits before bedtime

Always go to sleep at about the same time at night and always stand up at about the same time.

Do not stay up too long to not disturb your sleep-wake cycle. Please remember: We are diurnal animals.

Please sleep only as long as necessary (7 to 8 hours a day).

Don't take a long nap in the afternoon. 30 Minutes are enough.

If you suffer of a sleep disorder, don't take a nap at all in the afternoon.

Get used to rituals that put you in the mood of going to sleep (brush your teeth, listen to some relaxing music, read, etc). In that way you will be psychologically prepared to catch sleep.

Dinner and other meals in the evening

Only have a light dinner with low salt at least 2 hours before going to bed.

If you feel hungry before going to bed, drink a cup of hot milk. Milk supports the sleep. If you don't like milk, have a piece of fruit (with low acid).

Don't drink stimulating drinks or hot chocolate up to 5 hours before going to bed (coffee, tea, coke, drinks containing caffeine or quinine. Consider that also decaf drinks contain some caffeine).

Don't drink too much before going to bed, so you don't need to go to toilet during the night.

Avoid drinking alcohol at night. Alcohol makes you feel sleepy but it disturbs the sleep and can lead to making you wake up during the night.

If you are a smoker, please consider that nicotine stimulates the nervous system (and inhibits the assimilation and production of melatonin).

Sport and physical activities

Sport is healthy. Your body will regenerate only at night. You should be active during the day and avoid strong activities at night. This promotes the sleep.

Avoid intense physical and mental activity about 2 hours prior going to bed. If not, you'll activate your nervous system. Relax instead for a while.

Relax before going to bed with reading or listening to low music. In that way you'll prepare your body for the sleep.

Take a shower or a bath two hours before going to bed. It relaxes and promotes sleep.

Atmosphere in the bedroom

Make sure that your bedroom is well ventilated and cool. Wear a nightgown made of cotton or other natural fibres. A good mattress and pillow are a must for a good night's sleep.

If you suffer from breathing problems you should sleep on your side with a slightly higher pillow. Clean your airways before going to bed.

The bedroom should be silent. Use earplugs if there are disturbing noises. Don't sleep with the telly or music on. Keep your bedroom dark. If you don't have shutters, please wear a sleeping mask. Put out also the tiniest source of light (mobile phones, alarm clocks, stand-by light of the telly). They can disturb your sleep.

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