

Sleep Facts

Improve Your Sleep And Watch Your Life Get Better

(NAPSA)—Here's eye-opening news: One simple lifestyle change can improve your cognitive functioning; decrease anxiety, depression, anger and irritability; and even improve your libido! Just one change and you'll have more energy, be more productive and likely improve the quality of your personal relationships. You could even improve your immune system and decrease your risk for weight gain, obesity, diabetes and heart disease, doctor visits and hospitalizations, leading to lower medical bills. Seem like a lot of work? Relax! The way to get all these benefits is simple. You just need to get more sleep.



Richard Shane, Ph.D.

For many Americans, that may seem easier said than done. Richard Shane, Ph.D., developer of the Sleep Easily All-in-One Sleep Kit, notes that behavior changes known as sleep hygiene can help.

For occasional or moderate sleep problems, try these steps first: First, follow a regular sleep schedule. That helps regulate your body clock so you can sleep.

Next, try to avoid stimulating substances like caffeine, including chocolate and caffeinated sodas, six hours before bedtime. Less obvious than caffeine is smoking and alcohol. If you smoke (don't!), avoid it close to bedtime, since nicotine is also a stimulant. Limit your alcohol consumption to one to two drinks per day or less, and avoid alcohol altogether within three hours of bedtime. When you drink right before bed, the alcohol wears off in the middle of the night, causing you to wake up.

Remember to drink enough water during the day, so you're not very thirsty at bedtime. If you need to drink before bed or in the middle of the night, drink small sips instead of gulping. This way, you won't have to get up again to use the bathroom, further interrupting your sleep.

Give your body several hours to digest your last meal before bed. And during dinner or evening snacks, avoid any spicy foods or foods that can upset your stomach, especially close to bedtime.



Life could be a dream—or at least better—if you make sure you get enough sleep.

During the day, try to nap less and exercise more, especially outdoors. Being out in the sunlight for at least 15 minutes a day can help you sleep better that night. Sunlight is especially important during the winter, when days are shorter.

When you do go to bed, keep these tips in mind to optimize your ability to get a good night's sleep.

- Make sure your mattress is comfortable and less than eight years old.
- Keep the room dark and cool—about 67 degrees is comfortable for most people. Keep computers, TVs and work materials out of your bedroom so you mostly associate the place with sleep. Televisions, computers, cell phones and tablets emit a blue-white light that interferes with your brain's production of the sleep hormone melatonin. Stop using them half an hour or so before bed, wherever you keep them.
- Instead, slow down an hour before bed with a bath, a relaxing read or a little stretching to ease yourself into rest.
- Dimmer switches can help, too, to keep your house lights soft and low in the evening.

Worth the effort? Of course! One study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that car crashes resulting in injuries were 1.9 times more likely if the driver missed two hours of sleep!

For real help for insomnia from the moment your head hits the pillow, visit www.sleepeasily.com.