

Sleep Hygiene



Sleep hygiene, like our personal hygiene, is something that we need to look after 24/7 to maximise our chances of getting a good nights sleep. Below are some recommendations for good sleep hygiene.



Set a schedule. Create a regular sleep and wake schedule every day of the week. Avoid sleeping in more than an hour, even on days off.



Exercise and eat well. A healthy diet and exercise during the day can lead to better sleep at night.



Moderate stimulants. Consuming stimulants like coffee, tea, and chocolate can affect your ability to fall asleep and the quality of your sleep. Avoid these roughly 4 hours before bed time.



Avoid napping. Napping during the day will make sleep more difficult to sleep at night.



Sleep Hygiene



Use your bed only for sleep and sex. If your body and brain learn to associate your bed with sleep you'll start to feel tired as soon as you lie down.



Make your bed and bedroom comfy. Make sure your bedroom is somewhere you can relax and that your bed is comfy and feels just right for sleep..



Avoid devices before bed. Using devices such as your phone or TV can prevent us from falling asleep. Try to avoid these devices roughly an hour before bed.



Create a before bed routine. This can help us prepare for sleep. Ideally this would involve something relaxing like reading, taking a hot shower, or colouring-in.



Don't force yourself to sleep. If you haven't fallen asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something calming. This includes when you wake up during the night.



Nightmare Protocol



WHEN NIGHTMARES KEEP YOU FROM SLEEPING

1. **Practice** relaxation, pleasant imagery, and coping skills first, to be sure you are ready to work on changing your nightmare.
2. Choose a **recurring** nightmare you would like to work on.
3. Write down your **target** nightmare.
Include sensory descriptions (sights, touch, smells, sounds, tastes). Also include any thoughts, feelings, and assumptions about yourself during the dream.
4. Choose a **changed outcome** for the nightmare.
The change should occur BEFORE anything traumatic or bad happens to you or others in the nightmare. Essentially, you want to come up with a change that will prevent the usual bad outcome and that will give you a sense of peace when you wake up.
5. Write down the full nightmare with **changes**.
6. **Rehearse** and **relax** each night before going to sleep.
7. **Rehearse** and **relax** during the day.