

Sleep Hygiene

Create a Zen Bedroom

Learn how to set the right scene, so your space is peaceful and calm.

1. **Get earplugs or a sound conditioner:** Extraneous noise in the bedroom can disrupt your sleep; use whatever you need to create a quiet environment. Just try to ensure that the noise is consistent—like white noise—and not variable, like a television. The latter can actually disrupt your sleep, not help it!
2. **Avoid bright light:** Keep overhead lights and lamps in your house dim (or turn as many off as you can) in the 30 to 60 minutes before going to bed. The light from cell phone and TV screens also distracts from your ultimate goal in the bedroom—to fall asleep, so shut all devices down during that timeframe, too. We know it's hard!
3. **Position your alarm clock correctly:** Watching the seconds and minutes of a clock tick on and on as you try to fall asleep can increase your stress level, making it harder for you to fall back asleep once you've woken. Position the alarm clock so it's hard for you to see it from bed, (this can increase anxiety for not being able to fall asleep). If you still can't sleep, read or listen to soothing music until you're tired enough to fall back asleep.
4. **Temperature:** During the course of a normal day, your body temperature rises and falls slightly. This pattern is tied to your sleep cycle. As you become drowsy, your temperature goes down, reaches its lowest level around 5:00 a.m., and climbs slightly as morning begins. This is why the air in your room can affect the quality of your sleep: if it's too hot, it may interfere with your body's natural dip and make you more restless through the night. In fact, studies indicate that some forms of insomnia are associated with an improper regulation in body temperature. Every body is different, but between 62-68 degrees is ideal for a deep sleep.

Adjust Your Lifestyle

Try certain activities and avoid others to sleep better at night.

1. **Keep a consistent sleep schedule:** Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day—even on the weekends—reinforces the natural sleep-wake cycle in your body. Also, when you miss a night of good sleep, it can take up to a week for your body to reset.

2. **Skip the nap:** Sleeping throughout the day makes it harder to fall asleep at night. If you must, limit your snooze session to 30 minutes, and give yourself at least four hours between the nap and when you plan to go to bed for good.
3. **Develop a bedtime routine:** Creating a set of habits to run through at night will help your body recognize that it's time to unwind. For instance, 30 to 60 minutes before bed, read in bed or take a warm shower or bath. (The warm water trick is particularly helpful – as you cool off, the drop in your body temperature will help you feel sleepy!)
4. **Use your bed only for sleep or sex:** When we read or watch TV in bed, our bodies it is more difficult to for our bodies to recognize it's time to go to sleep.
5. **Stay away from stimulants at night:** Nicotine and caffeine are chemicals that are designed to help keep you awake, so drinking tea or coffee or eating chocolate (all of which contain caffeine), or using anything containing tobacco or nicotine should be avoided for four to six hours before you plan to go to sleep. Even alcohol, which initially makes you feel sleepy, makes it harder to get high-quality slumber, so skip more than a single glass of liquor, wine, or beer in the evening—especially as bedtime gets closer. Also, alcohol prevents you from getting into R.E.M (deep) sleep.
6. **Get physical during the day—at the right time:** Exercising during the day fosters sleep at night, but keep this in mind: Exercising too close to bedtime may keep you wired and make it hard to settle into sleep. Listen to your body; most people will want to work out at least a few hours before bed, if possible, or at least swap their Crossfit routine for something more relaxing, like yoga, if they are working out in the later evening hours.
7. **Mental relaxation:** Essential oils, stretching and meditating can be helpful to reduce anxiety and feel more relaxed. Keeping a gratitude journal, journaling or writing down tomorrow's goals are all ways to feel grounded before bed. ***note: certain essential oils can be harmful to pets – talk to your vet for additional info.**

Create a Sleep schedule

1. **Be Consistent** - Pick a bedtime and a wake-up time—and stick to them as much as possible. Life will inevitably interfere, but try not to sleep in for more than an hour or two, tops, on Saturdays and Sundays so that you can stay on track. That way, your body's internal clock will get accustomed to a new bedtime, which will help you fall asleep better at night and wake up more easily each morning.
2. **Make Gradual Adjustments** - You won't be able to change your sleep schedule overnight. The most effective tactic is to make small changes slowly. If you're trying to go to sleep at 10:00pm, rather than midnight, for example, try this: For

the first three or four nights, go to bed at 11:45pm, and then go to bed at 11:30pm for the next few days. Keep adjusting your sleep schedule like this. By working in 15-minute increments, your body will have an easier time adjusting.

- 3. See the Morning Light** - Your body's internal clock is sensitive to light and darkness, so getting a dose of the sun first thing in the morning will help you wake up. Opening the curtains to let natural light in your bedroom or having a cup of coffee on your sun-drenched porch will cue your brain to start the day.
- 4. Skip the Snooze Button** - Though it's certainly tempting to hit the snooze button in the morning to get a few extra winks, resist. The first few days of getting up earlier won't be easy, but post-snooze sleep isn't high quality. Instead, set your alarm to the time that you actually need to get up and remember that it may take a few minutes for your body to adjust to a daytime rhythm. (Note: because our sleep cycles are 90 minutes long, going back to sleep for 5-60 minutes means that you when wake up during your sleep cycle, it leads to feeling tired or sleepy during the day).

Resources:

- National Sleep Foundation: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>
- Sleep.org: <https://www.sleep.org/>
- American Sleep Association: <https://www.sleepassociation.org/>

Apps:

- Sleep cycle - Smart Alarm Clock
- Relax Melodies – Sleep Sounds
- Awoken – Lucid Dreaming Too
- White Noise Lite