



## **Sleep Hygiene**

When life is busy or overwhelming, oftentimes we begin to place sleep on the backburner. It's easy to think that rest is something that our bodies can do without, but this simply isn't true. Poor sleep habits can lead to moodiness, irritability, poor concentration, a lack of motivation, a weaker immune system, daytime sleepiness, and many other side effects which only inhibit us more from doing what it is we need to accomplish. Below are a few ways you can combat poor sleep hygiene.

### **1. Set a schedule**

Establishing a regular sleep schedule for each day of the week is beyond helpful for your routine. Waking up at the same time each day is more beneficial than you may realize. Making sure not to sleep in more than an hour (even on your day off) can do wonders for your sleep hygiene! If you're worried about setting a schedule, start with small, step by step adjustments to a fixed bedtime and wake up time.

### **2. Don't force sleep**

If it's been twenty minutes and you're unable to drift off, get up and do something calming (read a book, draw, write in a journal, etc). Avoid screens or other stimulating activities that could lead to becoming more alert.

### **3. Avoid consuming caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and THC**

It's important to avoid these substances where possible as they can affect the quality of your sleep along with the capability of falling asleep.



#### **4. Avoid naps**

Though many of us love a daytime nap, they can cause sleep to be more difficult at night. If you're going to nap, do so for a short period of time in the early afternoon. Naps over an hour or done later in the day can be especially harmful to your sleep.

#### **5. Use your bed for sleep only**

If your body associates your bed with sleep, you'll begin to get tired as soon as you lay down. However, doing work, watching TV, or completing other waking activities in bed can have the opposite effect, causing you to become more alert when you lay on your bed.

#### **6. Follow a bedtime routine**

It may seem trivial to have a routine at night, but doing the same tasks each day before bed will encourage your body to get tired at the time when you begin completing the tasks. A thirty minute window of wind down time with no screens is especially helpful in a bedtime routine.

#### **7. Exercise and Eat Well**

It may seem like an obvious one, but exercising and eating well can lead to more energy throughout the day and better sleep at night. Avoid eating large meals or participating in strenuous workouts up to two hours before bed.

It's important to remember that sleep hygiene doesn't cure issues with sleeping all on its own. If you're suffering from conditions such as insomnia or narcolepsy please consult a doctor who can recommend the best treatment for you moving forward.