

Sleep Guide



Goal: Sleep more or more soundly.

How: Create associations in our minds with cues in our environment to trigger sleep behaviors.

Steps: Check off each of the behaviors below as you incorporate them into your sleep-prepping behaviors.

- Avoid caffeine after 2:00pm.
- Make a **sleep sanctuary** by limiting time and activities in bed. Train your mind to think of nothing else when you finally get in bed. If it's not related to sleep directly, keep it out of your bedroom. Behaviors to avoid:
 - Snacking in bed
 - Watching television in bed
 - Flipping through your smartphone in bed
- Arrange for **comfortable bedding**: pillows, blankets, etc.
- Aim for a bedroom temperature of **65 degrees**
- Install shades** to block out unnecessary lights.
- Establish a **bedtime routine**, which tells your mind and body, we're switching into sleep mode.
 - **Turn off electronics** 1+ hours before bed, especially those with blue light (such as smart phones, tv, etc.).
 - Have a small **warm cup of herbal tea**, like chamomile.
 - Take a **hot shower** to raise body temperature; cooling off will trigger the body to sleep.



Not falling (back) asleep? Try these techniques by themselves or a combo:

- Keep a **notepad and pen** by your bed: Download all your todos and concerns that aren't already in your planner, etc. Anything that might pique your interest instead of let you drift off.
- **Paced breathing**: counting to four on your inhale, holding for two counts, and exhaling for six.
- **Belly breathing**: focus on expansion of just the belly on the inhale (with little chest expansion).
- **Visualize drawing a square** in your mind: inhale and move an imaginary dot up the left side of the square, exhale and move the dot across the top of the square, inhale down the other side, and exhale across the bottom of the square to complete it. Repeat as needed.
- **Count down from 200**.
- **Get up**: If it's been more than 15 minutes and you're not sleeping, leave your bedroom. Sit on your couch and do something boring for 10 minutes: read a book, listen to some instrumental music, fold laundry. Then try again. Sometimes the worry of not sleeping can get in the way of sleep more than other things. Anxiety and frustration don't make for a cozy bed. That's why taking a break from trying is better than tossing and turning in angst.

If these techniques aren't working, consider speaking with your physician or a sleep specialist. There may be other factors contributing to your sleep difficulties.