

Healthy Sleep Habits

Establish a routine

Try to establish a regular sleeping pattern by going to bed and waking up at roughly the same time every day. Try to go to bed only when you feel tired enough to sleep. Then get up at your usual time. This may mean you will spend less time actually in bed, but more of the time in bed asleep.

"Routine, routine, routine. Preparing your brain and body for sleep, letting yourself know that it's time to wind down. Then in the morning set a time to get up and stick to it no matter what."

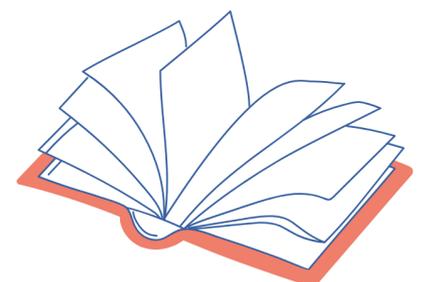


Allow yourself time to relax before bed

You may find a relaxation routine can help you prepare for sleep.

There are several things you can try:

- Do something calming – such as listening to relaxing music, or having a bath or shower
- Practice breathing techniques – see our **Breathing Exercises** activity sheet for ideas
- Visualisation – picture a scene or landscape that has pleasant memories for you
- Meditation and body scans – there are lots of free meditation and body scans online; see our **Body Scan for Sleep** activity sheet and our **Further Resources** sheet for more information
- Give yourself some tech-free time - using bright screens and laptops has been shown to affect sleep, so try to stop using these devices an hour or so before bed to help prepare yourself for sleep
- Read a book or listen to a podcast

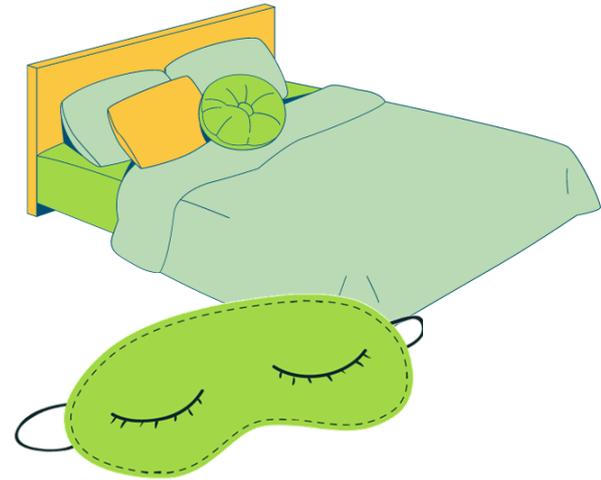


Good sleep environment

Make sure where you sleep is comfortable. You may want to experiment with the temperature, light and noise levels to work out what works best for you. On the whole, dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to sleep, but this will vary from person to person.

You could try opening your window slightly during the day time to allow ventilation and create a cooler temperature in your bedroom.

If it's not possible to control the light and sound in your bedroom try using an eye mask and ear plugs, a fan or relaxing music to mask external noise.



Sleep space

Only use your bedroom for sleep and intimacy to help you associate your bed with sleep. This means you should avoid using your bed to watch TV, work on a laptop or to eat.

Exercise and daylight

If you can, try to do regular exercise at least two hours before bedtime and try to spend time outside in the daylight. Even a short walk during the day could improve sleep.



Eat well

Try to eat a balanced, healthy diet and avoid eating filling, fatty, fried or spicy food before bed. See our **Science of Sleepy Food** handout for information about sleep-friendly food and evening recipe ideas.

