

Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is defined as a set of behavioural and environmental recommendations intended to promote healthy sleep. Paying attention to sleep hygiene is one of the most straightforward ways that you can set yourself up for better sleep.

Strong sleep hygiene means having both a bedroom environment and daily routines that promote consistent, uninterrupted sleep. Keeping a stable sleep schedule, making your bedroom comfortable and free of disruptions, following a relaxing pre-bed routine, and building healthy habits during the day, can all contribute to ideal sleep hygiene.



Obtaining healthy sleep is important for both physical and mental health, improving productivity and overall quality of life. Everyone, from children to older adults, can benefit from better sleep, and sleep hygiene can play a key part in achieving that goal.

Requirements for optimal sleep:

- **Cool room** — ideally 20° C. Our body temperature falls as we near bedtime, if your room is too warm your metabolic pathways won't acknowledge and prepare your body for sleep.
- **Effective mattress** — relaxed posture and comfortable support will help you fall and stay asleep.
- **Complete darkness** — even the light of an electric alarm clock will stimulate the light sensors in your body inhibiting the natural level of melatonin (a hormone your body creates to help initiate sleep).

- **No eating for a minimum of two hours before sleeping** — your blood sugar levels will be too high, and your body's energies focused on digestion not the repair and resetting that occurs during sleep. It can also encourage feelings of indigestion and reflux waking you up.
- **Minimal electronics before bed** — not only does it stimulate the brain making it hard to switch off but the blue light from electronics closely resembles daylight making it harder to drift off.
- **Daily mindfulness practice** (meditation, breathing, etc) — helps calm the mind.
- **Consistent exercise** (heart rate elevated 3–4 times per week) — regular exercise can make it easier to sleep at night.
- **No coffee or caffeine after 12 pm** — its stimulating effects last longer than you think, it can take up to 5 hours for the effects of a cup of coffee to start clearing from your body.
- **Consistent bedtime routine** — your body's natural circadian rhythms will start to acknowledge and prepare to a set bedtime.
- **Daylight exposure** — natural daylight, especially sunlight, is one of the key drivers of circadian rhythms that can encourage quality sleep.
- **Reduce alcohol consumption** — it may make it easier to fall asleep, but it disrupts the length and quality of sleep.