



# Sleep is for Every Body



A body that goes a long time without sleep will eventually shut itself down to gain sleep. Sleep interruptions or insomnia can occur for many reasons including pain associated with an injury or an illness, as a side effect from the use of medications, and anxiety. Without sufficient sleep, a decline in problem-solving ability, cognitive function, and response time can occur and irritability and mishaps can increase. No amount of caffeine or stimulants can replace the need for sleep. Ideally, most adults need around 7.5 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep for optimal well-being.

Review this list for practical tips and information to aid in restful sleep. Note that if you are unable to sleep several nights a week or for more than a few nights in a row we recommend contacting your medical provider. Symptoms of concern include daytime fatigue, trouble concentrating, and mood disturbances. Chronic insomnia can lead to anxiety and/or depression.

Tips	Strategies and information
<b>Keep a regular sleep pattern</b>	For example: Go to sleep between 10 and 10:30 pm, awake at 6:00 AM or 6:30 AM. Your body will set its rhythm to meet the set pattern.
<b>Make your environment conducive to sleep</b>	Turn off technology at least 30 minutes before bedtime; darken the room or wear eye covers; use a fan to drown out background noise and cool off.
<b>Avoid alcohol as a sleep aid</b>	Alcohol interferes with deep sleep causing more wakefulness later in the night; it may also interfere with breathing while sleeping by narrowing the passage at the back of the mouth (pharynx).
<b>Stop drinking coffee, energy drinks, or any type of stimulant 5-6 hours before you plan to sleep</b>	Stimulants may block sleep-promoting chemicals; although they are very popular, be cautious with energy drinks. They often have one to three times the amount of caffeine (and/or contain other stimulant properties) as a soft drink.
<b>Prepare mentally and physically before bed with a short ritual or routine</b>	Wash your face with warm water, read a few pages of a favorite book, listen to instrumental music, write, journal, or stretch. Note: Using electronic devices are not recommended for at least 30 minutes before bed due to the light they emit. Try reading a paperback, not an eReader.
<b>Deep breathing and other relaxation techniques may help with the onset of sleep</b>	Find guided exercises for breathing or relaxation techniques: the NMCPHC – Health Promotion and Wellness website offers an audio library* on the Psychological & Emotional Well-being page.
<b>Naps as short as 10 minutes will help maintain alertness and decrease fatigue</b>	Napping is a great choice when you get under 6 hours of sleep in a night. Keep naps between 10- 30 minutes so as not to interrupt regular sleep patterns. Avoid napping within a few hours of your regular bedtime.



# Resources

## American Academy of Sleep Medicine

This site provides a sleep diary and information on sleep.

<http://yoursleep.aasmnet.org/pdf/sleepdiary.pdf>

## National Institutes of Health

*Your Guide to Healthy Sleep* is an excellent resource and provides a sleep diary.

[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy\\_sleep.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf)

And

National Institutes of Health - Insomnia Treatment

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/inso/treatment.html>

## \*Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC)

The Health Promotion and Wellness department provides resources for psychological health and emotional well-being as well as an audio library of relaxation techniques.

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/psychological-emotional-wellbeing/Pages/relaxation.aspx>