

# GOOD SLEEP HABITS



Most people experience a bad night's sleep now and again, but if you regularly don't get enough sleep it can really affect how you feel and what you can get done during the day.

The amount of sleep we need varies from person to person. It also tends to change throughout our lifetime. As we get older we tend to require less sleep.

Your bedroom should be a relaxing environment.

Your bedroom ideally needs to be dark, quiet, tidy and be kept at a temperature of between 18C and 24C.

*What is sleep hygiene?* It is a term used to describe good sleeping habits.

## Sleep hygiene

Below are some tips on how you can do this:

1. Establish a sleep routine so that your body knows when you are getting ready for sleep. Having a regular bedtime routine teaches your body when it is time to go to sleep
2. Have a soothing drink like camomile tea or a milky drink
3. Have a warm bath, or a routine of washing your face and brushing your teeth
4. Go to bed at the same time each night
5. Get up at the same time every morning
6. When in bed think of nice things (e.g. think of positive things that happened that day they might be big or small, such as a good conversation, seeing the sunshine, or hearing music on the radio).
7. Do a relaxed breathing exercise (one hand on your stomach, the other on your chest, slow your breathing down, breathe deeply in your stomach instead of high in your chest)
8. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get out of bed and go into another room (keep a torch and warm clothing near the bed so it is easier for you to get out of bed), do something that will not over stimulate your brain until you feel sleepy (e.g. reading), and return to bed only when you feel sleepy.
9. Repeat point 8 as often as you need until you fall asleep within 20 minutes
10. Avoid taking naps if you can. If you must take a nap, try to keep it short (less than one hour). Never take a nap after 3 p.m.
11. Do not eat a heavy meal before bedtime
12. Do not use electronic devices with a bright screen in bed prior to sleep
13. Do not use your bed as an activity centre (i.e. use your bed only for sleeping and sex)
14. Write a "to do" lists for the next day can organise your thoughts and clear your mind of any distractions
15. Relaxation exercises, such as IPilates & Yoga can help to relax the muscles.
16. Do not exercise vigorously, as it will have the opposite effect



**TIP:** Keep a sleep diary

It can be a good idea to keep a sleep diary. It may uncover lifestyle habits or daily activities that contribute to your sleeplessness.