

HEALTHY SLEEP TIPS FOR ADOLESCENTS

1. **Stick to a sleep schedule** of the same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends. This helps to regulate your body's clock and can help you fall asleep and stay asleep for the night.
2. **Stop using all electronic devices at least one hour before bed.** That means no TV's, computers, tablets and phones in your bedroom. Use a regular alarm clock, not your phone. Keep your phone on a "docking station" located away from where you sleep. The blue light coming from your electronic devices activates your brain and disrupts sleep.
3. **Relaxing bedtime ritual.** A relaxing, routine activity right before bedtime conducted away from bright lights helps separate your sleep time from activities that can cause excitement, stress or anxiety which can make it more difficult to fall asleep, get sound and deep sleep or remain asleep.
4. **Avoid Naps.** If you have trouble sleeping, avoid napping especially in the afternoon. Power napping may help you get through the day, but if you find that you can't fall asleep at bedtime, eliminating even short catnaps may help.
5. **Exercise daily.** Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity. Exercise at any time of day, preferably not within 2 hours of going to bed.
6. **Evaluate your room.** Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep. Your bedroom should be cool – between 60 and 67 degrees. It should also be free from any noise that can disturb your sleep. Finally, your bedroom should be free from any light. Check your room for noises or other distractions. This includes a bed partner's sleep disruptions such as snoring. Consider using blackout curtains, eye masks ear plugs, "white noise" machines, humidifiers, fans or other devices.

7. **Use a comfortable mattress and pillows.** Make sure your mattress is comfortable and supportive. The one you have been using for years may have exceeded its life expectancy – about 9 or 10 years for most good quality mattresses. Have comfortable pillows and make the room attractive and inviting for sleep but also **free of allergens** that might affect you. Make sure you use your bed for sleeping only.
8. **Avoid bright light** in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the morning. This will keep your circadian rhythms in check.
9. **Avoid heavy meals and caffeine in the evening.** Caffeine can disrupt sleep. Eating big or spicy meals can cause discomfort from indigestion that can make it hard to sleep. If you can, avoid eating large meals for two to three hours before bedtime. Try a light snack 45 minutes before bed if you're still hungry.
10. **Wind down.** Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity such as reading.
11. **Go into another room to relax** until you feel tired. It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment. Use your bed only for sleeping to strengthen the association between bed and sleep. If you associate a particular activity or item with anxiety about sleeping, omit it from your bedtime routine.
12. **If you are still having difficulty falling asleep,** don't hesitate to speak with your doctor who may recommend the use of melatonin, a natural hormone supplement or even refer you to a sleep consultant. You may also benefit from recording your sleep in a Sleep Diary to help you better evaluate common patterns or issues you may see with your sleep or sleeping habits.

