

Sleep Hygiene and Quality Sleep





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COVID-19 has changed the lives of people everywhere. Many are working from home and trying to stay connected with colleagues and loved ones through technology. Almost everyone has had their normal routines upset in one way or another, and sleeping patterns may be compromised, too.

However, the importance of getting enough quality sleep is crucial to overall health and well-being.

The Importance of Getting Quality Sleep

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), sleep supports a variety of important functions including our metabolism, brain health and can have an impact on certain health conditions like obesity.

Research also shows that one-third of Americans experience periods of insomnia, and one in 10 experience three sleepless nights each week for months on end.

Sleep is key to helping our bodies stay healthy. Yet, sleep is hard when anxiousness is high, especially in these uncertain times.

Sound Advice for Sound Sleep

Sleep helps us navigate stressful times better. And, many of us can control our behaviors and reduce the impact of the pandemic on our sleep.

With quality sleep critical to our mind and body, here are some recommendations for getting better sleep tonight:

1. Be mindful of what you eat.

High anxiety can cause fatigue, negatively impact our moods and lead to sleep deprivation, making it difficult to make healthy nutrition choices. Being mindful of what you eat can help you manage stress levels and change the way you respond to stress. Stop eating and snacking at least three hours before bedtime. This allows for proper digestion and helps you avoid heartburn that can keep you awake at night.

2. Make exercise the norm.

Exercise has numerous critical health benefits – but it also helps your body relax into sleep. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins that naturally make you feel good. For some people, gentler, low-intensity workouts such as yoga, Pilates, or a relaxing walk in the park are the best remedy for stress. Others prefer high-intensity workouts such as weightlifting.

3. Prepare yourself to rest.

Follow the digital detox rule of no computers or digital readers at least one hour before bedtime – that means TV too!

4. De-stress with relaxation techniques.

The evening and bedtime hours are also a good time to perform some relaxation techniques. Take time to let your mind and body unwind – with deep breathing, relaxing stretches, and mindful meditation.

5. Drink chamomile or lavender tea.

Chamomile promotes relaxation and restful sleep. Chamomile's sleep-inducing effects have to do with the flavonoid apigenin, which binds to and inhibits certain receptors in the brain that cause sleepiness. Just like lavender essential oils promote relaxation and sleep, drinking lavender tea has calming benefits.

6. Keep a schedule.

While life can often wreak havoc with sleep times, make every effort to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day. This creates a sleep rhythm that your body will thank you for.

Healthy nutrition, exercise, proper lifestyle choices and sleep promote better health, and while they won't take away the anxiety surrounding the pandemic, they can help you better manage overall well-being during these uncertain times.

