

# Daytime Habits to Support Your Sleep

## How do your daytime habits impact your sleep at night?

We've all experienced how a bad night of sleep can impact your whole next day, but did you know that your habits during the day can make or break your nighttime sleep?

Our bodies run on an internal clock known as a circadian rhythm. Our circadian rhythm regulates when we feel awake or sleepy over a 24-hour period. Your choices all day long impact your sleep-wake cycle!

**Morning light, dark at night.** Daylight directly impacts your sleep-wake cycle and tells your brain to be awake. That's why it can feel harder to get out of bed on a dark winter morning. Open the blinds, turn on bright lights, or take a quick walk outside to get natural sunlight. Waking up at the same time each morning can also help regulate your sleep-wake cycle.

**What you eat matters.** Eat a healthy, balanced diet. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine as these can interrupt sleep. Avoid large or heavy meals within a few hours of bed bedtime, but don't go to bed hungry, either. It's okay to have a snack if you're hungry before bed.

**Mind how you move.** Vigorous exercise is best, but even 5-10 minutes of light exercise is better than nothing. Exercise any time of day, but not at the expense of your sleep schedule.

**Wind down at night.** Stick to a regular sleep



schedule, meaning go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. If you have trouble falling asleep, avoid naps in the afternoon. Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual, which might include a shower, cup of relaxing tea, soothing music, reading, or anything else you find relaxing. Avoid bright lights, television, or phone screens for at least 30 minutes before bed. The light from these devices can interfere with your body's ability to make melatonin, a hormone that helps you fall and stay asleep.

**Train your brain.** If you have trouble falling asleep, get out of bed and go do something relaxing in another room. Only get in bed when you feel sleepy. This helps your brain associate your bedroom with sleep, instead of lying awake. If you do wake up in the middle of the night, avoid looking at your phone or turning on bright lights. Remember - light tells your brain it's time to be awake! Instead, try meditating or perform a simple mental task like "1+1 = 2, 2+2=4, 4+4 = 8..." or name a fruit or vegetable for each letter of the alphabet.

Source: [SleepFoundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org)

## Igniting Action:

What stands out to you about your daytime habits? What change could you make to sleep better at night?

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