

## Seven Secrets of Sleeping Soundly

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Would you like to discover the secrets of sleeping well tonight? Follow these tips and save hours of frustrating tossing and turning struggling to get to sleep. These tips will help improve your sleep. For some, the improvement may be dramatic. For others, more gradual. Rest assured that by implementing these techniques you will be on the path to sleeping well tonight.

1. **Establish a regular sleep schedule.** Learn your own natural sleep pattern so you can determine the optimum amount of sleep you need, and the times when your body is most ready for sleep. Get up at the same time every day and do not take naps. Naps disrupt your sleep/wake cycle.
2. **Reduce caffeine, chocolate, and high fat bedtime snacks.** Try having no caffeine after noon. If that does not help, consider eliminating caffeine.
3. **Engage in bedtime rituals that let your mind and body know it is time for sleep.** Try taking a warm bath, having a cup of herbal tea, or quietly reading. If there are concerns or unfinished tasks that you are thinking about, write them down in a notebook you keep by your bed and set them aside so that you do not have to give them another thought until tomorrow.
4. **Cultivate your bedroom environment so it is quiet and comfortable.** Make the room dark, use lavender scents, eliminate the television and illuminated clocks you can view from bed. Use earplugs or eye masks, if needed.
5. **Don't struggle to sleep.** Do not associate your bed with pleasant times and falling asleep easily. Develop an alternative plan for those times when you are unable to sleep. Get up and move to another room, make a cup of herbal tea, practice progressive muscle relaxation, meditation etc., until you are sleepy and ready for bed again.

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6. **Stress affects sleep.** Integrate anxiety reduction techniques and lifestyle changes so your level of tension throughout the day is reduced.
  
7. **Consider professional help if these techniques do not work for you.**  
Lack of consistent deep sleep is detrimental and the cause of many mental and physical health problems. Fortunately, numerous treatments can help you sleep soundly tonight.

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