



## Tips for Getting A Better Night's Sleep

Considering we spend so much of our lives (around one-third of it), sleeping, you think we'd get better at it as we age. But studies show that, oftentimes, the opposite is true – especially as we get older.

### **Sleep is especially important for us as we age**

It reduces our risk for both physical and neurological decline. With some folks, the reasons for not sleeping enough are physical. For others, the causes can be mental or emotional; and for still others, it can be a combination of factors. Regardless, though, of why you might not be getting as much sleep as you need, there are some things you can do to improve the quality of your shuteye.

### **Maintain a sleep schedule.**

As we age, our circadian rhythms can naturally change – usually toward going to sleep earlier and arising earlier. If you find this is happening to you, don't try to fight the urge and stay up later, like you used to. Rather, try your best to follow your body's rhythms – and if maybe that means you have to record a TV show or two that you miss, well, that's what DVRs were made for! Likewise, if you're traveling or on vacation or visiting friends and family for the weekend, do your best to keep to your optimal sleep schedule.

### **Avoid bright screens in the hour or two before going to sleep.**

Be it your smartphone, laptop, tablet, backlit e-reader or television set, these electronic devices all emit a certain kind of blue light that cues your body that it's time to wake up. This light will suppress your body's natural

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production of melatonin, thus making it harder to fall, and stay, asleep. To wind down and quiet your mind before bedtime, it's better to read a book in low light, or listen to soft, soothing sounds.

### **Avoid daytime napping.**

Who doesn't love the idea of snoozing on a rainy day or nodding off by the pool? But just know that, if you give in to the temptation, you'll likely have to pay for it with difficulty getting to sleep that night. Same goes for post-supper drowsiness: Fight the urge to lie down and, instead, go for a brisk walk.

### **Limit – or, better yet, eliminate – your caffeine consumption.**

Caffeine – be it in coffee or soda – is a stimulant. That's why so many folks drink it in the morning for a quick pick-me-up. But drinking too much of it, or drinking it too late in the day, can adversely affect your ability to fall asleep that night. Another substance to be careful with is alcohol. Depending on how it affects your system, consuming alcohol or wine could negatively impact the quality of your sleep – even if you fall asleep right away.

### **Get a full health screening for sleep-related disorders.**

Certain physical conditions – such as restless leg syndrome and sleep apnea – can wreak havoc with your ability to sleep at night. And with the latter ailment, you might not even know you have it, so have your physician check for it. Likewise, other physical conditions – such as being overweight or in pain – can also interrupt your sleep schedule. Often, when you rectify an underlying physical issue, one of the results is an improvement in sleep.

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### Health & Wellness Services ~ offered by Envision

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