

5 Tips to Get Better Sleep

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/five-tips-to-get-better-sleep/7585004.html>

Do you spend too many nights trying to fall asleep? You are not alone.

Nearly one-third of American adults say they do not get the suggested seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

Some of the major causes are stress, anxiety, and a culture that experts say is about productivity, not rest.

Molly Atwood of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine said, "You need to understand what your body needs and try your hardest to prioritize that and not just see sleep as kind of what's left over of the day."

Sleep experts say that you should avoid unproven methods to fall asleep and stay asleep. Instead, they suggest five simple ideas:

<Create a buffer zone>

First, try creating a "buffer zone" - a time of separation - between the end of your work day and your bedtime. Experts suggest leaving your work and daily responsibilities alone about an hour before bed.

While in this "buffer zone," you should not check email, pay bills, do housework, or look on social media. Instead, try to relax with a book, enjoy a fun activity or spend time with loved ones.

Dr. Annise Wilson of Baylor University said, "Anything that helps to center you and just helps you focus and release a lot of that tension from the day will then help promote sleep."

<Watch what you eat>

Eating a large meal right before bedtime can also hurt your sleep. So, try to eat in the early evening hours.

Atwood said that eating a large meal is "like giving your body a really large job to do right before sleep at a time when things are supposed to be shutting down."

But do not go to bed very hungry, either. Try small amounts of food with protein or healthy fats, like cheese, almonds or peanut butter on whole grain bread.

<Avoid caffeine and alcohol>

Having an alcoholic drink or espresso after dinner could lead to a long night.

While alcohol can help you fall asleep at first, it can also hurt your sleep cycle. As a result, the quality of sleep declines. The chances that you will wake up more often in the middle of the night increase.

Caffeine blocks adenosine, a chemical that helps make you feel sleepy. And it can take your body up to 10 hours to clear caffeine.

For these reasons, experts suggest finishing up your caffeinated or alcoholic drinks many hours before bed.

<Limit technology>

Light from phones and computer screens can interfere with the circadian rhythm – or the internal clock that naturally wakes us up. Light has this effect by suppressing melatonin, which assists with sleep.

But you will need self-control to stop looking at screens, suggested Dr. Dianne Augelli of Weill Cornell Medicine.

“TikTok doesn’t want you to stop,” Augelli said. “Only you can stop you, so you have to learn to put that stuff away.”

<See your doctor>

If you are still having a hard time getting a good night’s sleep after more than one month of trying, experts say it is time to go to a doctor.

This is especially true if your sleepless nights are hurting your work performance or your mood.

Atwood said, “It doesn’t matter how much relaxation you do. At a certain point, it’s not going to be effective if there’s a significant amount of stress... It might involve some problem-solving to figure that out.”