



Tips for restful sleep

Try the following techniques for preparing yourself and your environment for sleep to see what works for you. Keep note of any tips in particular that work for you or anything you did differently.

Tip	How it helps	Notes
Use essential oils, especially lavender	These help to promote rest and relaxation through slowing the heart rate and reducing blood pressure. Use in a diffuser or pillow spray.	
Control the sleep environment	Ensure your bedroom is at a cool, comfortable temperature and wear light bed clothing. When we fall asleep, our bodies naturally cool down. Helping your body get to that lower temperature faster encourages deeper sleep.	
Make the bedroom a technology-free zone	Do not watch TV, work or use electronic devices for at least an hour before bed. Read a book instead. Make your bedroom a technology and work free zone, helping to strengthen the mental association between your bedroom and sleep.	
Try relaxation techniques	In the hour before bed take a bath, meditate, listen to sleep music or other relaxation exercises. This helps your mind to let go and promote rest. The drop in body temperature after getting out of a bath also helps to promote sleep.	
Write down your worries	Keep a notepad by the bed and if you find you lie awake worrying, write your worries down and then put them aside. Or you could try journaling, exploring your thoughts indepth and looking at patterns over a longer period of time. There are also many apps you can use to track your moods, worries and emotions.	

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Reduce distractions	Use earplugs to block out any sound or an eye pillow/mask to block out any light.	
Keep to a bedtime routine	Keep to a consistent routine of going to bed at the same time every night and waking up at the same time in the morning to help your body to regulate its sleep cycle and therefore get restful sleep.	
Avoid stimulants	Avoid caffeine in the afternoon or evening, or altogether. Although alcohol may help you drop off to sleep, it later acts as a stimulant, increasing the number of awakenings and generally decreasing the quality of sleep later in the night.	
Have a change of scenery	If you're not asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed, go to another room, and do something relaxing like reading or listening to music until you are tired enough to sleep.	
Look at your eating habits	Try to eat earlier in the evening so your body has time to digest your food before bed and avoid big meals late in the evening. A light snack can sometimes help though.	
Plan your exercise wisely	This is great for helping your body clock and promoting sleep, but ensure that you have about 2 to 3 hours between exercising and going to bed.	
Keep a sleep diary	Keeping a sleep diary for at least two weeks will help you better evaluate common patterns or issues you may see with your sleep or sleeping habits. Find a downloadable example in 'Resources'.	