

SLEEP HYGIENE:

How to Get Better Rest and Wake Up Refreshed

If you've ever struggled to fall asleep, stay asleep, or wake up feeling alert, you're not alone. Quality sleep is one of the most important things your body and mind need to stay healthy—but in today's busy world, it's easy to overlook. That's where sleep hygiene comes in. It's not just about brushing your teeth before bed—it's about creating the right habits and environment to help you sleep better and feel your best.

Good sleep hygiene can boost your mood, improve your focus, support your immune system, and even help regulate your appetite. The best part? You can start improving it tonight. Here's how.

What Is Sleep Hygiene?

Sleep hygiene refers to the routines, behaviors, and environmental factors that influence the quality of your sleep. Think of it as the way you "set the stage" for your body and brain to rest. Just like brushing your teeth is part of your dental hygiene, turning off your phone at night or sticking to a bedtime routine is part of your sleep hygiene.

Improving your sleep hygiene isn't complicated—but it does take consistency.

Why Sleep Matters

Before diving into the how, it's helpful to understand the why. You need sleep for just about every function your body performs. While you're asleep, your brain processes memories, your muscles recover, and your body resets for the next day. Without enough rest, everything from your attention span to your immune system takes a hit.

When your sleep is disrupted—even if it's just by staying up too late or waking frequently during the night—you might notice you feel sluggish, moody, forgetful, or anxious the next day. The good news is, you can turn things around by making small changes that add up.

How to Improve Your Sleep Hygiene

Let's break down some of the most effective ways you can build healthier sleep habits.



1. Stick to a consistent sleep schedule.

Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends. This helps regulate your body's internal clock (also called your circadian rhythm), making it easier to fall asleep and wake up naturally.



2. Create a relaxing bedtime routine.

An hour before bed, start winding down. That might mean dimming the lights, reading a book, stretching gently, journaling, or listening to calm music. The goal is to signal to your body that it's time to shift from "go mode" to "rest mode."



3. Limit screen time at night.

The blue light from phones, tablets, and TVs can interfere with your body's production of melatonin—a hormone that helps you sleep. Try turning off screens at least 30–60 minutes before bed. If you must use a device, use night mode or blue light filters.



4. Make your sleep environment comfortable.

Your bedroom should be cool, dark, and quiet. Use blackout curtains if needed, and consider white noise machines or fans to block out background sounds. A supportive mattress and comfortable pillows can also make a big difference.



5. Watch what you eat and drink.

Try not to eat large meals, drink caffeinated beverages, or snack on sugary treats in the hours leading up to bedtime. Caffeine can stay in your system for hours and disrupt your sleep without you even realizing it. Aim to wrap up your last meal a few hours before you go to sleep to give your body time to digest.



6. Get regular exercise—but not too late.

Daily physical activity can improve sleep quality and help you fall asleep faster. Just be careful not to work out too close to bedtime, as intense exercise may keep you awake.



7. Limit naps, especially late in the day.

If you need a nap, keep it short—around 20 to 30 minutes—and try to rest earlier in the day. Long or late naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

When Sleep Still Feels Hard

Even with good habits, you might go through periods where sleep doesn't come easily. That's normal—stress, illness, or changes in your schedule can throw things off. What's important is that you don't ignore ongoing sleep problems.

If you've tried improving your sleep hygiene and still struggle with insomnia, snoring, or extreme fatigue, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor. There may be underlying issues like sleep apnea or anxiety that need attention.

Final Thoughts

Improving your sleep hygiene isn't about perfection—it's about giving your body and brain the conditions they need to rest, recover, and recharge. When you prioritize sleep, you're not being lazy—you're taking care of your health.

Start small. Maybe it's going to bed 15 minutes earlier tonight or turning off your phone an hour before bed. Each step you take can bring you closer to the deep, refreshing sleep you deserve.

Because when you sleep better, you feel better. And when you feel better, you can show up as your best self every single day.