

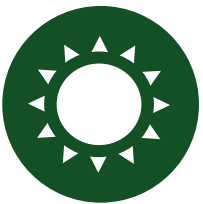
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) SLEEP

These are unprecedented times. Given the real and tangible threat of the coronavirus pandemic on personal, community, and societal levels, it is normal to experience anxiety and sleep problems. Cultivating healthy sleep is important; **better sleep enables us to navigate stressful times better in the short term**, lowers our chance of developing persistent sleep problems in the long term, and **gives our immune system a boost**.

DAYTIME TIPS TO HELP WITH SLEEP



Keep a consistent routine. Get up at the same time every day of the week. A regular wake time helps to set your body's natural clock. In addition to sleep, stick to a regular schedule for meals, exercise, and other activities. Pay attention to your body's cues and find a rhythm that works for you and that you can maintain during this "new normal."



Get morning light. Light is the main controller of the natural body clock, and regular exposure to light in the morning helps to set the body's clock each day. Natural sunlight is best, as even cloudy days provide over double the light intensity of indoor lighting. Try to expose yourself to natural light by stepping outside, at a distance from others, for at least 20 minutes.



Exercise during the day helps improve your sleep quality at night, reduces stress, and improves mood. Fit in exercise as best as you can. If you need to go outside for exercise, maintain proper social distancing at least six feet away from others. Many gyms and yoga studios are now "at home" and offering virtual programs at low or no cost.



Don't use your bed as an escape. While the gravity of the pandemic certainly makes us all tired, try not to spend too much time in bed during the day, especially if you are having trouble sleeping at night. If you must take a nap, try to keep it short — less than 30 minutes.



Helping others may help with feelings of uncertainty or unease. If you would like to be more actively involved in helping people, seek out ways to contribute your skills, donate money, or leverage your social capacity locally. Doing altruistic acts may provide a sense of purpose, reduce helplessness, and alleviate some of the uncertainty contributing to sleep problems.

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NIGHTTIME TIPS TO HELP WITH SLEEP



Prepare for bedtime by having a news and electronic device blackout. Avoid the news and ALL electronics at least one hour before bedtime. The nonstop news cycle seldom provides new information in the evening hours that you can't wait until morning to hear, and will likely stimulate your mind or incite fear, making it harder to fall and stay asleep.



Cell phones, tablets, and all electronic devices make it harder for your brain to turn off, and the light from devices may delay the release of the hormone melatonin, interfering with your body clock. If you need something to watch to help you unwind, watching something that you find relaxing on TV from far away and outside the bedroom is likely okay for a limited time.



Minimize alcohol intake. While alcohol can help people fall asleep, it leads to more sleep problems at night.



Set a regular bedtime. There are certain times at night that your body will be able to sleep better than others. If you feel sleepy but your brain is busy thinking, it can't shut off and go to sleep. It may be helpful to sit down with a pen and paper in the evening and write down the things that worry you; you can review this list in the morning and attend to any important concerns.



Reduce stress. The evening and bedtime hours are also a good time to perform some relaxation techniques, such as slow breathing or yoga. There are many free resources available for bedtime meditation.



Don't spend too much time in bed during the night. Minimize spending time in bed in which you are not sleeping. If you are having trouble going to sleep or staying asleep, don't stay in bed for more than 20 minutes. Get out of bed and do a quiet activity — read a book, journal, or fold some laundry.