



Staying Healthy AT HOME

RELAXING BEDTIME ROUTINES

Establishing a regular bedtime routine helps condition your body and mind to realize that it's time to go to sleep. While there's no one "right" amount of time to devote or activity to do, the most effective routines are both relaxing and enjoyable. If you don't already have a routine, the following suggestions may be helpful as you get started:

Read

For troubled sleepers, reading in another room and associating the bed only with sleeping can be helpful. But if you like to relax by reading in bed, that's fine!

Listen to music

Just make sure it's not too exciting or emotional. Check out this list <http://www.nosleeplessnights.com/great-music-to-fall-asleep-or-relax-to/> for ideas.

Write down any free-floating worries and/or reminders

Putting them on paper and then "to bed" for the night will help you to fall asleep and sleep more soundly.

Engage in a spiritual practice (i.e. prayer, yoga, meditation... etc.)

If this is something you enjoy, doing it before getting into bed can be a great time to incorporate it and help you relax.

Practice progressive relaxation

It's a simple technique which works well for several reasons:

- It relieves tension in the muscles which also helps with mental relaxation.
- The focus on your body takes your attention away from anxious or negative thoughts.
- By tensing and releasing your muscles you learn what a relaxed state feels like, and you can then get yourself back into that state whenever you need to.



Sample Progressive Muscle Relaxation

The following progressive muscle relaxation is just one example; there are many others you can find online.

1. Begin by sitting or lying in a comfortable position and taking a few slow, deep breaths.
2. Inhale as you flex your toes and feet for a few seconds; then exhale slowly and relax them.
3. Take a deep breath and tighten your lower leg muscles; hold for a few seconds and then relax again as you exhale.
4. Breathe in and tense your upper leg; hold and relax.
5. Breathe in and tense your abdomen and lower back; hold for a few seconds and then relax.
6. Repeat with your chest and upper back.
7. Repeat with your hands, lower arms, upper arms, shoulders and neck.
8. Then tense your face – try screwing it up to tense your facial muscles.
9. Finally, tense your whole body, hold for a few seconds and slowly relax each part as you exhale.
10. Repeat 3-4 times.