



Staying Healthy AT HOME

SLEEP AS SELF-CARE

Getting enough sleep is a vital part of self-care at every age, but it can be challenging for many of us. Below is a list of simple strategies for getting more—and higher quality—sleep:

Unplug

The glow from your laptop, iPad, smart phone, or other electronics on your nightstand may pass through your closed eyelids into your hypothalamus—the part of your brain that controls sleep. The stimulating effects of electronics can also impact our ability to fall asleep—avoid use before bed or if you wake up in the middle of the night.

Go dark

Invest in room-darkening shades, turn off that light in the hallway...etc.

Stick to a sleep schedule

Though it may be difficult at first, try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends and holidays.

Exercise regularly

it helps us fall asleep faster and sleep more deeply. Bonus points if you get outside in the morning—bright light helps to regulate circadian rhythms.

Avoid all caffeine after 2 pm

It stays in your system for about 8 hours and will either prevent your brain from entering deep sleep or stop you from falling asleep altogether.

Listen to a bedtime story

Load a familiar audiobook—one that you know well—so it doesn't engage you but distracts your attention until you drift off to sleep.

Have a snack

A handful of walnuts or tart cherry juice, for example, have both been known to promote sleep because they contain melatonin. Or, try a cup of Sleepy Time tea.

Review your medications

Certain drugs can cause insomnia, such as some prescribed for high blood pressure and anxiety/depression. Have your doctor evaluate how the medications and/or supplements you take may be affecting your sleep.

Cool it

The recommended bedroom temperature is between 65° and 75°F, but pay attention to how you feel under the covers. Having cool sheets helps trigger a drop in your body temperature, and that signals the body to produce melatonin (which induces sleep). That's why taking a warm bath or hot shower before bed can also be helpful—both temporarily raise your body temperature, and then as it lowers in the cooler air, your body is “cued” to feel sleepy.

