

## SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE SLEEP

1. Establish a regular time for going to bed and getting up in the morning and stick to it even on weekends and during vacations.
2. Use the bed for sleep only, not for reading, watching television or homework; too much time in bed can fragment sleep.
3. Avoid naps during the day.
4. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol for four to six hours before bedtime. The first two are stimulants that can make it difficult to sleep. And while alcohol can have a sedating effect at first, it tends to disturb sleep after several hours.
5. Don't exercise within four to six hours before bedtime. However, working out earlier in the day can actually improve sleep.
6. Avoid fluids just before bedtime so that sleep is not disturbed by the need to use the bathroom.
7. Avoid eating a large meal before bedtime, but a light snack might help sleep. Food containing tryptophan can also promote sleep (turkey, chicken, yogurt, bananas, warm milk); chamomile non-caffeinated tea can also be soothing.
8. Take a hot bath about an hour and a half before bedtime. The body temperature then begins dropping rapidly, which may help sleep after that time. (Taking a bath shortly before bed actually increases alertness.)
9. Do something relaxing in the half hour before bedtime (for example, reading or listening to relaxing music; doing relaxation exercise or guided imagery, even once you are in bed).
10. Make sure your bed is comfortable and the bedroom is conducive to restful sleep - quiet, at a comfortable temperature, and well ventilated.
11. Do not look at the clock. Obsessing about the time will just make it more difficult to sleep.
12. If you can't fall asleep within 15-20 minutes, get out of bed, go into another room, read or do a quiet activity using dim lighting until you are sleepy again. (Don't watch TV, which emits too bright a light.)

Source: C. Bonner, Ph.D., Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Effectiveness, and Distress Tolerance Skills for Adolescents: A Treatment Manual, © 2002, University of Pittsburgh, Services for Teens at Risk (STAR-Center), Pittsburgh, PA.