

Sleep Hygiene Handout

This handout belongs to:

Quality sleep is crucial for sustaining optimal physical and mental health. Insufficient sleep increases susceptibility to negative cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions to stress (Williams et al., 2013). Embracing effective sleep hygiene techniques can notably enhance your sleep quality and your general welfare.

What is Sleep Hygiene?

Sleep hygiene refers to practices and habits that promote sound sleep quality and overall sleep health. Good sleep hygiene aims to optimize both the duration and quality of sleep, ultimately contributing to better physical and mental well-being.

Tips for Good Sleep Hygiene

1. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule

- Go to bed and try to wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Consistency helps regulate your body's internal clock, promoting better sleep quality.
- Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night, depending on your needs. However, the amount to sleep varies as one ages.

2. Create a relaxing bedtime routine

- Initiate soothing pre-sleep routines such as reading, enjoying gentle music, or indulging in a warm bath.
- Refrain from engaging in stimulating activities such as watching television or using electronic devices emitting blue light.
- Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation to unwind and prepare your mind for sleep.

3. Optimize your sleep environment

- Ensure your bedroom is dim, silent, and comfortably cool. Utilize blackout curtains, earplugs, or white noise devices to minimize disruptions.
- Purchase a supportive mattress and pillows that offer comfort and proper alignment for your body.

4. Limit exposure to screens before bed

- Refrain from using electronic gadgets like smartphones, tablets, and computers for at least one hour before bed. The emitted blue light from these devices can disturb your natural sleep patterns.
- If you must use screens, enable the "night mode" or use blue light-blocking glasses to reduce the impact on your sleep.

5. Watch your diet and hydration

- Refrain from consuming substantial meals, caffeine, or alcohol near bedtime, as they may disrupt your ability to initiate and maintain sleep.
- Maintain hydration levels during the day, but limit fluid intake in the evening to avoid frequent disruptions for bathroom breaks during sleep.

6. Stay active during the day

- Participate in consistent physical activity, but refrain from vigorous workouts near bedtime as they can invigorate you and hinder sleep onset.
- Strive to engage in approximately 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on most days of the week to enhance the quality of your sleep.

7. Manage stress and anxiety

- Practice relaxation techniques to alleviate tension and promote relaxation before bedtime.
- Keep a journal to jot down worries or thoughts that may keep you awake. Writing them down can help clear your mind and ease bedtime anxiety.

8. Seek professional help if needed

- If you consistently grapple with sleep issues despite adhering to proper sleep hygiene, consider seeking assistance from a healthcare professional. They can evaluate potential underlying sleep disorders and suggest suitable interventions.

It's important to note that enhancing sleep hygiene requires dedication and patience, but the rewards are significant. By integrating these practices into your nightly regimen, you can experience considerable improvements.

7-Day Sleep Tracker

Date	Bedtime	Wake Time	Hours of Sleep	Notes

Use this tracker to identify patterns and adjust your sleep routine accordingly for better sleep hygiene. Record any factors that may have affected your sleep quality, such as caffeine intake, stress levels, or exercise.

Notes:

References:

CDC. (2022, September 13). Tips for better sleep. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/sleep_hygiene.html

Cleveland Clinic. (2023, September 24). Sleep hygiene tips for a better night's rest. Cleveland Clinic. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/sleep-hygiene>

Williams, P. G., Cribbet, M. R., Rau, H. K., Gunn, H. E., & Czajkowski, L. A. (2013). The effects of poor sleep on cognitive, affective, and physiological responses to a laboratory stressor. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 46(1), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-013-9482-x>