

## Improving Your Sleep Hygiene



Do you have trouble falling or staying asleep? Wake up tired and unable to concentrate? Experience low motivation and mood changes? These could all be indicators of poor sleep hygiene.

Good sleep hygiene is essential for a healthy life. Healthy sleep has a direct impact on our physical and mental health.

Improvements in sleep hygiene can lead to increased energy and productivity, improved memory and concentration, and greater capacity for decision-making and stress management. Therefore, taking steps to improve your sleep habits can have a significant effect on your overall quality of life.

Listed below are some science-backed practices that you can incorporate into your daily routine to improve your sleep hygiene and ensure a more fulfilling sleep.

**Keep a regular sleep schedule.** Do your best to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day (even on weekends). A regular sleep schedule will allow your body to get into a rhythm, making it easier for you to fall asleep and wake up each day.

**Create a bedtime routine.** A relaxing routine serves as a reminder to your body that it's time for sleep. For example: Every day, before bed, meditate for 10 minutes, read a chapter of a book and then take a shower.

**Use your bed only for sleep.** Avoid watching tv, reading, or doing work while in bed. The goal is for your body to learn to associate your bed with sleep.

**Do not lay in bed awake.** If your still awake after 20 minutes, get up, and do a relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. When you feel sleepy, return to bed.

**Avoid substances before bed.** Substances such as caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine can affect your ability to fall asleep and the overall quality of your sleep.

**Move and eat better to sleep better.** A healthy diet and an exercise regimen can lead to better sleep. However, it is best to avoid intense exercise and large meals right before bedtime.

**Create a restful sleep environment.** Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and cool as these conditions have been shown to help you to fall asleep faster.

**Avoid screen time at least 30 to 60 minutes before bed.** The blue light signals to your body that it is still daytime, which decreases the production of melatonin and effects your ability to fall and stay asleep.

**The key to lasting change is to start small, be patient, and be consistent.** Begin by incorporating one or two of the above practices and add additional strategies only when the others have been implemented consistently. Be patient and remind yourself that even small changes can have a big impact.

For additional support, families with children between the ages of 0-22 can contact the Youth Services Department's Education & Training Center to receive free mental health services. Services are offered in-person and via telehealth. **To contact the Education & Training Center, please call 561-233-4460 or visit our [website](#).**

*submitted by Lauren Stroker, MS, BCBA, Doctoral Intern*

*Youth Services Department*

*Residential Treatment and Counseling Division*

*Education & Training Center*