

Goals and Behaviors For Healthy Sleep

Primary Goals

Duration

Aim for 7 - 9 hours of sleep each night

Fragmentation

Reduce the amount of time it takes to fall asleep

Reduce the amount of times you wake during the night

Consistency

Maintain consistent sleep and wake times

Try not to change you sleep and wake times by more than 2 hours

Behaviors

Create a Routine



- Start to wind down 30-60 minutes before bed
- Avoid doing activities that might prevent you from winding down like playing video games, using the Internet, or cleaning



- Avoid doing important or stressful things before bed like paying bills, answering emails, or studying
- Don't go to bed if you're actively angry or stressed



- Don't focus on sleep issues or lay in bed worrying
- Get out of bed if you can't sleep and do something relaxing like listening to music

Focus on Lifestyle



- Have nutritious meals; don't eat or drink too close to bedtime but also don't go to bed hungry
- Limit your caffeine intake



- Exercise regularly, stopping a few hours before bedtime
- Try to work in some exercise on long shifts



- Practice mindfulness i.e. being present in the moment
- Add breathing and meditation exercises to your routine to calm nerves and reduce stress

Stay Consistent



- Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- You'll have an easier time falling asleep and waking up on time if you keep a consistent schedule



- Nap with caution. Naps should be 20-30 maximum, longer induces grogginess
- Avoid napping late in the day when it may interfere with bedtime



- Allow at least a full 8 hours in bed
- Don't snooze, just set your alarm for when you need to get up

Use Substances Carefully



- Alcohol and over-the-counter sleep aids can fragment your sleep. This causes dozens of micro-awakenings you are not aware of, that disrupt your sleep



- Alcohol and sleep medications can cause a hangover effect which leaves you feeling groggy



- Consider caffeine as an energy boost but use it wisely
- Stop using caffeine several hours before bed; if working the night shift, use it before or early in the shift

Adjust Your Environment



- Keep your bedroom cool and dark
- Use earplugs or white noise to reduce sounds
- Keep your mattress and pillows in good shape



- Screens emit blue light which interferes with sleep
- Shut off all your devices before bed
- Use amber glasses or an app that filters out blue light



- Use your bedroom exclusively for sleep and sex, move all other activities and devices to another room
- Adjust your alarm clock so you can't see it from your bed