

Sleep Hygiene Checklist:

Sleep Hygiene is everything you do throughout the day and how it impacts sleep.

Fact: Proper sleep is the most anti-inflammatory process you can do.

Use this checklist along with the attached detailed explanations to assure you get the best sleep possible every night!

- **Sleep Routine:**
 - Consistent sleep/wake times
 - Dim, change, brush, relax
- **Temperature**
 - House
 - Baths
 - Clothing
- **Mattress, Bedding & Pillows**
- **Sleep Position**
- **Bed Partners**
 - Humans
 - Animals
- **Lights – Day & Night**
 - Black out curtains
 - LED's & Screens
 - Night lights & others
- **Alarm Clocks**
- **Noise**
- **Nutrition**
 - Food
 - Coffee
 - Water
- **Supplements**
- **Exercise**
- **Naps**
- **Drugs**
 - Prescription
 - OTC
 - Cigarettes
 - Alcohol
 - Marijuana
 - Illegal
- **State of Mind**
 - Meditation
- **Morning Routine**
- **Breathing, Snoring & Sleep Disorders**

Sleep Routine:

A consistent sleep routine is very important for overall quality of sleep. The sleep routine you develop will help your body prepare for sleep every night. When you begin your sleep routine your body will begin to release melatonin and this will help your body move towards sleep. A sleep routine can consist of whatever you want, assuming it only involves things that are non-stimulating. A typical sleep routine would include: Change of clothes, dimming the lights in the house, ceasing major physical activity, cessation of food consumption, brushing and flossing the teeth and doing something relaxing that doesn't involve intense physical activity or screens (computers, phones, televisions, etc.). Use the list below to help develop your sleep routine and guide you on your journey to excellent sleep.

Temperature:

Choose a house temperature that isn't too warm. Typically low 70's makes for a very comfortable environment. Find what makes you and others in your house comfortable and set your thermostat so it is consistent within a few hours prior to sleep.

Body Temperature:

Baths: Taking a hot bath about one hour before bed time can help induce sleep. The bath raises your body temperature and once you get out of the bath your core temperature begins to drop. This causes you to become drowsy and fall asleep easier. To increase the effectiveness, you can diffuse non-stimulating essential oils (lavender, or bergamot), use soaps with chamomile and or use epsom salt (magnesium) in the tub.

Clothing:

If you wear clothes to bed, choose loose fitting clothes that breathe well and have no restrictions. Warm clothes will cause restless sleep and you may end up waking to remove them.

Mattress, Bedding & Pillows:

In general a more firm mattress tends to be best overall for most people. But, the correct mattress for you is the one you can sleep comfortably on and wake up feeling refreshed.

Bedding: Should be a light breathable material and include no odd textures that may bother you during the night. Again, choose the one that you feel the best with.

Pillows: Similar guidelines to choosing a pillow as with choosing a mattress. Forget whatever the so called "experts" say and choose the pillow that you can sleep best on. A lower pillow that mirrors your natural cervical spine curve and keeps you flat on your back is best. But again, the best pillow is the one you can fall asleep and stay asleep on.

Sleep Position:

The position you choose to sleep in can have a great effect on how you sleep and how your next day goes. The absolute best position to sleep in is flat on your back. This helps to keep proper alignment of the spine and proper, balanced tension on the muscles; in turn, this helps the nervous system function optimally so your entire body can function properly. However, for a lot of people, sleeping on the back can cause breathing problems. Especially for those who have breathing

concerns like sinus congestion, snoring and or sleep apnea, then side sleeping is best while you resolve the breathing issue and can eventually return to sleeping on your back.

Bed Partners:

Bed partners can be one of the largest obstacles to a quality night of sleep. Many of us have not only a significant other sleeping with us, but animals and kids in our beds too. If possible try to limit your bed partners to just you and your significant other. If that is not possible at the moment, then do your best to assure you have your own space in the bed and can sleep comfortably. If a bed partner snores, makes noises or moves excessively in their sleep, please talk with them about it as these are signs they are not sleeping well either. If some of the simple suggestions here don't resolve their sleep concerns, please consult a sleep specialist.

Lights:

Even though you are around lights all day long, the time of day you are exposed to different types of lights can make or break your sleep. There are several different things to consider with lights:

Daytime Light Exposure: Daytime light exposure is important; first thing in the morning you should try to get into natural sunlight and expose as much of your body as possible (and as appropriate). For those who rise very early you can use a light box to help you awaken first thing in the morning. This mimics the sun's natural light frequencies and helps your body wake up and even helps stimulate vitamin D absorption and increase serotonin levels. Serotonin greatly effects mood, appetite, sexual desire and..SLEEP! Aim for no less than 30-minutes of sunlight exposure per day.

Types of Light: There are several different types of light. To make it simple; the more time you spend in natural light during the day the better. The more time you spend under fluorescent or LED lights, the worse. Especially LED lights as those give off more blue light...And...

Blue Light & Screens: Blue light is the frequency emitted from screens of all types; phones, computers, tablets, televisions, etc. You want to limit your time in front of blue lights throughout the day, and especially within two hours of bed-time. Blue light is very stimulating to your brain and signals you to be awake as this is the natural frequency of light present during the day. A great solution for this is to do one or all of the following. 1. Purchase glasses that filter blue light and wear them anytime your are viewing a screen. 2. Purchase blue light screen filters to put on all your devices. 3. Install blue light filtering software on your devices. F.Lux is free software that varies the light of your screen with the day and most phones come with "dark mode" or color filters options. 4. Avoid screens as much as possible within two hours of bed. Play board games, have non-confrontational conversations, read a book, relax and smile.

Red Light: Night time is the time to use red light. The frequency of red light is least stimulating to the brain and will still allow you to see at night. Use only red lights when waking up in the middle of the night for any reason. If possible switch to only red light use within two hours of bed. Or if possible, put all lights on a dimmer and dim them two hours prior to bed.

Blackout curtains: Get blackout curtains in your room ASAP! Any light pollution when you are sleeping is negative. If the lights from your neighbor's house, the street, cars or anything else are coming through your windows your sleep will be negatively impacted even at a subconscious level. You should not be able to see your hand twelve inches in front of your face if your room is properly darkened.

Night Lights & others: Night lights should only be used if they are red and low in intensity, but preferably, not at all. Again, you should not be able to see your hand in front of your face in your bedroom. If you have a night light on it may be keeping you from getting your best sleep.

Black Electrical Tape: Anything in your room that has a flashing LED or other light on it such as your thermostat or GFI outlets; cover the light with black electrical tape. Those little lights are subconsciously keeping your brain from completely shutting down.

Eye Masks: The easiest way of all to avoid lights...purchase an eye mask and wear it once you're in bed. Just don't forget you have it on if you wake up to use the restroom in the night. These are great for travel too.

Alarm Clocks:

Do you use your phone as an alarm clock? If so, refer to the above and make a change to the screen so your not ruining your sleep. As for your alarm clock, if yours has a red display, you're ahead of the game. However, it still is best to cover it after it's set. Try to not look at your clock if you awaken in the middle of the night as this may get your brain worked up thinking about how long you have to sleep and all the things you have to accomplish the next day.

Type of alarm: Download an app that will awaken you when you are ready to wake up. This means it will start with light noises and awaken you from sleep when you are in a light stage of sleep as opposed to potentially awakening you from deep sleep in which case you will feel groggy and start your day off poorly. How these alarms work is to set the time you need to be up by and the app will start to make light noises around 30 minutes prior to your needed awake time. If you are in light sleep you will wake up, if you are in deep sleep you won't hear it and you will awaken as you move out of deep sleep. If all else fails and the time you set comes around the alarm will get louder and indeed wake you up. I have been using the app "Sleepzy" for this.

Sound of Alarm: The sound you choose should be non-stimulating, birds chirping or light chiming bells, etc. Not the standard alarm noise that everyone hates.

Noise:

Noises can bring you out of sleep and make it difficult to fall back asleep. This is a protective mechanism as unwelcome noises at night were usually trouble when we were living in caves. Today noises can still mean trouble, but usually it's just a neighbor's car, a child, an electronic device and so on. Limit noises as much as possible and try to decrease noise pollution within 2 hours of bed. It is okay to listen to the radio or have a conversation, just do so at a low noise level and avoid loud, jarring noise sources. If you live in a naturally noisy environment ie. the city; try using noise cancelling headphones or a sound machine so the sound your hearing is at least consistent and non-stimulating. Unplug or turn off anything else that is likely to make noise.

Delta waves: These are the type of brain waves that you will have as you fall into deep sleep. This noise played when falling asleep can actually help achieve sleep faster and get into deeper sleep. There are apps you can find for this or just download some delta wave music from the internet.

Phones: If you have a phone in your room set it to "airplane mode" or "do not disturb". You want to assure you aren't getting alerted by text messages or emails or anything else in the middle of the night. If you're concerned about family needing to contact you, there is an option on phones to allow your "favorites" to contact you even if your phone is on "do not disturb". You can put any

family or friends you may be concerned about in this group and they would be the only people allowed to contact you. As well, anyone who calls twice in a row will be allowed through on their second attempt.

Nutrition:

The food you eat and things you drink all day long will affect the way you sleep. Eating anything throughout the day that causes inflammation in the body will affect your breathing and your sleep negatively. Please see the anti-inflammatory guidelines. Essentially avoid the following: Sugar, Grains, Gluten, Soy, Dairy, Grain-fed Meats, Farm-raised fish, Packaged and Processed foods.

Drinks: Beverages can have a positive or negative impact on sleep. Here are some of the major categories:

Coffee & Tea: Coffee is actually very healthy for you; if used properly. Caffeinated coffee should be consumed only before 1pm. Preferably, coffee should be consumed without creamers. Almond or coconut milk are okay to use. Also, if you're drinking coffee that isn't freshly roasted (within 15 days) you are likely consuming mold and toxins that will harm your body, cause inflammation and decrease your sleep & HRV. Tea is great for you, but same rules as coffee due to the caffeine, unless your sipping a caffeine free tea. There are some great teas that can actually help the onset of sleep. Many of these would contain kava or chamomile. Look for "sleepy time" tea or something labeled as such and likely it is going to help you achieve sleep.

Other Caffeinated beverages & soda: Simply put, DO NOT USE. Most "energy" drinks with caffeine contain tons of sugar and other things that are very unhealthy and will cause inflammation.

Water: Everyone should consume at least half their body weight in ounces daily. I.e. A 200lb person should consume 100 ounces of water daily. Add 8-16 ounces for any of the following: consumption of any non-water beverage, exercise session of any sort and anything else that involves sweating. Proper hydration decreases inflammation in the body and will help you sleep better!

Supplements:

There is a long list of supplements, herbs & essential oils that may help with sleep. This is not an exhaustive list, just the most common supplements shown to benefit sleep: *Please consult your physician prior to taking any of these*

5-HTP: This is the necessary ingredient to make serotonin, the hormone that makes you feel happy and pleased. As well, 5-HTP is the precursor for melatonin, the sleep hormone (see below). Taking this can help you fall asleep and stay asleep. Be cautious with this and don't take it for more than one month at a time. If sleep does not normalize naturally, please consult a sleep specialist.

Melatonin: A naturally produced hormone in the human body that helps to signal the onset of sleep. The release of melatonin should be signaled by our natural environmental light, hence the need for a good sleep routine and limiting artificial light exposure in the evening. Try using melatonin about 2 hours prior to bed. Melatonin can also be effective in deterring jet lag. In this case you would take melatonin 2 hours prior to your "future planned" bed time to help stimulate sleep. Start with the lowest dose possible and see how it affects you. Don't

overdo it with this supplement and don't use it consistently for more than four weeks as an exogenous source can modify your own production of hormones.

Magnesium: This will help your muscles relax, calm you down, decrease cramps and induce sleep. Start with 2-300mg and work your way up to 5-800. If you have bowel symptoms (loose stool) you should scale back.

Exercise:

Exercise is one of the most important things you can do for yourself in a day, but done at the wrong time it can ruin your sleep. Here is what you need to know: 1. Exercise early in the morning is best is least disruptive to sleep that night. If you get up early and start your day off with an exercise session, even 20-30 minutes, it will help you wake up, give you a great energy boost for the day and keep your metabolism fired up. 2. DO NOT exercise within 3 hours of bedtime. Exercising, especially intensely, too close to bedtime will increase your body temperature and make it difficult to fall asleep. Unlike a bath that increases your body temperature from an external source and keeps you calm, the exercise internally increases your body temperature by elevating metabolic processes and that take a while to cool from. In addition to the temperature problem, exercise too close to bed is overly stimulating and will keep you up as a result of adrenaline release. 3. The best type of exercise is anything. Just make sure you are moving at least 30 minutes per day.

Naps:

There is nothing wrong with taking a daily nap, especially if you utilize large amounts of energy each day. However, if you feel like you need to take a nap each day and you are not utilizing large amounts of energy, it is possible you are not getting enough quality sleep at night. As well, if you do choose to take a nap midday, assure you only do one per day and it lasts no longer than 20 minutes. If a nap lasts too long it can ruin your sleep that coming night and start a vicious cycle of relying on a nap each day.

Drugs:

There are many different forms of drugs. Some are "legal" and some are "illegal". Either way they can affect your sleep and here is what you need to know about each type.

Pharmaceutical & Over The Counter (OTC) Sleep Drugs: These are tranquilizers, they simply knock you unconscious. This is not sleep. Your body will not restore. Although these drugs are legal when prescribed by a doctor or purchased at a pharmacy, they all have serious side-effects you need to be aware of and you should read through each drugs full description. A dependency can quickly be developed and can be difficult to overcome. Sleep drugs should never be the first answer to a sleep problem, consult a physician who will help to find the root cause of a sleep concern.

Cigarettes: Cigarettes are a stimulant. Smoking cigarettes will negatively impact your ability to sleep well and will decrease health in about every way.

Alcohol: Alcohol is depressant. And although alcohol will make you tired and eventually lead to sleep onset; once the alcohol wears off you will likely wake up or begin to have un-satisfying sleep. Similar to a sleep drug, the unconscious state is not sleep and it is not restorative.

Marijuana: Marijuana, like alcohol can be a depressant that will help the onset of sleep, however, like alcohol, once the affects wear off you may have unsatisfying sleep. Depending on the

type of marijuana, sativa or indica, it may also have more of stimulating, focusing affect. In this case it may be difficult to achieve sleep. This may be helpful as an interim use to correct a sleep cycle, but please consult your physician first.

Cannabidiol CBD:

CBD has recently become very popular, be cautious of the source as there are many low quality brands on the market. Full spectrum is best! Cannabis naturally has THC in it, the particle in marijuana that makes you "high". Isolated CBD is not as effective for any cause. You will not get high from CBD products, the amount of THC is very minimal. Although there is very little downside here, it is best to have natural sleep whenever possible as this can create anxiety if a person does not have their CBD product and may not be able to achieve sleep without it.

Other Drugs: Nearly all drugs will have a negative effect on sleep. Just like mentioned above, if it is a depressant, this is not real sleep and as the drug wears off, sleep becomes unsatisfying. If the drug is a stimulant you simply won't be able to get to sleep. The best bet is to avoid drugs, "legal" or "illegal", they're all altering your natural processes.

State of Mind/Stress:

When you are trying to fall asleep and you have something worrisome on your mind it can be near impossible to achieve sleep. Here are a few hacks to help quiet your thoughts:

1. Try taking a bath and or reading a book, podcast or relaxing music to unwind and take your mind off the stressors of the day.
2. Play a fun board game or lightly physical but fun game.
3. Go for a walk.
4. Try meditation and or biofeedback
 - a. Paced breathing at your resonance frequency rate or 6 breaths per minute will stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system (brake pedal) and help with relaxation.
 - b. Guided meditation can be very helpful in taking you through a series of thoughts to help you relax and ease your mind.
 - c. Progressive muscular relaxation is a series of contracting and relaxing the muscles from toes to head to help you relax.
 - d. Low & slow conscious breathing can be done for 3-5 sessions to help the parasympathetic nervous system (relaxation) turn on. This is breathing done into the belly, allowing your lower torso to slowly expand like a barrel from all sides and an even slower releasing of the air.
5. Vent out your stressors with a loved one or friend a few hours before bed, then try any of the above.

Morning Routine:

A quality morning routine sets the tone for your entire day and your sleep that evening. Morning routines can include whatever you want, assuming it will impact you and your day positively. A good example of a quality morning routine may include:

Wake up, take HRV, meditate, brush teeth, exercise, read, listen to a podcast or music that gets you motivated, stand in front of a light box or out in the sun, shower, say positive affirmations, eat a breakfast with high quality foods, etc.

It may sound goofy that what you do in the morning will affect your sleep, but it absolutely does. Try this for a week with things that make you feel good and happy. See how you sleep.

Breathing, Snoring & Sleep Disorders:

Breathing: Breathing properly is hands down the most important thing you can do throughout every day and night. Humans can go without food for 15-30 days, without water for 3+ days, but we can only go without air for 3-5 minutes, and after about 2 minutes irreversible brain damage starts to set in. That said, we need air and we need to assure we're getting it properly. If you are breathing improperly your tissues are not getting enough oxygen and likely CO₂ levels are too low. This combination causes an array of health concerns that start at a cellular level and eventually become full on diseases.

Proper Breathing: Breathing at rest should only be through the nose. The mouth should only be open when talking, eating or drinking. The tongue should always be placed properly on the palate with the mouth closed. A breath in should make your diaphragm move downward and cause your belly to inflate, along with the sides of your abdomen and lower back. Posture when breathing ideally would be shoulders down and back, cervical spine neutral so the ears are over the shoulders and eyes gaze just above parallel to the ground. Breathing rate at rest should be 12-20 breaths per minute.

Snoring, Sleep Apnea & Sleep Disordered Breathing: Sleep disordered breathing encompasses many different things and should be thought of as a spectrum of airway issues as opposed to many different health concerns. Upper airway resistance syndrome (UARS) is the beginning where people may notice increase fatigued/exhaustion, snoring, memory issues, teeth grinding, headaches, etc. Eventually this problem will move into diagnosable sleep apnea and slowly work its way up to severe obstructive sleep apnea if the environment and human allow it to do so. Some people may stay in UARS for ever. This is a serious health concern no matter where someone falls on the spectrum and should be addressed immediately. Snoring in itself is a sign a person has an obstructed airway to some level. This may not be diagnosable sleep apnea just yet, but it may progress over time. Many are concerned to get evaluated for sleep issues as they have heard it ends in a life sentence to wearing a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device. Despite what you may have heard, a CPAP machine is not the only way to treat sleep apnea, so please see a sleep specialist. Alternatives to a CPAP include: life style modifications, an oral appliance and rehabilitation of the airway so it can function properly and naturally. Even if initial therapy begins with a CPAP, there are many natural steps that can be taken while using the CPAP so eventually the CPAP is no longer needed as natural, healthy sleep breathing begins to return.

Sleep Disorders: Other sleep disorders include several variations of insomnia, hypersomnia, parasomnias, circadian rhythm disorders and sleep movement disorders. If you believe you have any of the following, please alert a health care professional and work together to get it resolved.

Insomnias: This is the inability to fall asleep or stay asleep

Hypersomnia: Excessive sleepiness. May cause a person to fall asleep at inappropriate or dangerous times. Narcolepsy is a hypersomnia.

Parasomnia: Unwanted events that occur while you are falling asleep, sleeping or waking up. This can be sleep talking, walking, eating, night terrors, confusion arousals, bedwetting, etc.

Circadian Rhythm Disorders: When a person's sleep-wake cycle is out of a natural alignment. Examples include: Jet lag, shift work disorder, advanced or delayed sleep-wake phase.

Sleep Breathing Disorders: Any problem related to breathing while sleeping. Central or obstructive sleep apnea, UARS and snoring.

Sleep Movement Disorders: Unwanted, involuntary movement when sleeping. Teeth grinding, leg cramps, restless leg syndrome and periodic limb movement are examples.