**Good Sleep Guide**

# Adopting habits to help you sleep

* **Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool.** Noise, light, and heat can interfere with sleep. Try using a sound machine or earplugs to hide outside noise, an open window or fan to keep the room cool, and blackout curtains or a sleep mask to block out light.
* **Stick to a regular sleep schedule.** Support your biological clock by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, including weekends, even if you’re tired. This will help you get back in a regular sleep rhythm.
* **Avoid naps.** Napping during the day can make it more difficult to sleep at night. If you feel like you have to take a nap, limit it to 30 minutes before 3 p.m.
* **Avoid stimulating activity and stressful situations before bedtime.** This includes vigorous exercise; big discussions or arguments; and TV, computer, or video game use. Instead, focus on quiet, soothing activities, such as reading, knitting, or listening to soft music, while keeping lights low.
* **Don’t read from a backlit device (such as an iPad).** If you use an e-Reader, opt for one that is not backlit, i.e. one that requires an additional light source.
* **Limit caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine**. Stop drinking caffeinated beverages at least eight hours before bed. Avoid drinking alcohol in the evening; while alcohol can make you feel sleepy, it interferes with the quality of your sleep. Quit smoking or avoid it at night, as nicotine is a stimulant.

# Preparing your brain for sleep

Your brain produces the hormone melatonin to help regulate your sleep-wake cycle. As melatonin is controlled by light exposure, not enough natural light during the day can make your brain feel sleepy, while too much artificial light at night can suppress production of melatonin and make it harder to sleep. To help naturally regulate your sleep-wake cycle and prepare your brain for sleep:

* Increase light exposure during the day. Take breaks outside in sunlight, remove sunglasses when it’s safe to do so, and open blinds and curtains during the day.
* Limit artificial light at night. To boost melatonin production, use low-wattage bulbs, cover windows and electrical displays in your bedroom, avoid bright light and turn off television, smartphone, and computer screens at least one hour before bed. If you can’t make your bedroom dark enough, try using a sleep mask.

# Learning to associate your bed with sleeping, not sleeplessness

Train your body to associate the bed with sleep and nothing else—especially not frustration and anxiety.

* Use the bedroom only for sleeping. Don’t work, watch TV, or use your computer or smartphone. The goal is to associate the bedroom with sleep, so that when you get in bed your brain and body get a strong signal that it’s time to nod off.
* Move bedroom clocks out of view. Anxiously watching the minutes tick by when you can’t sleep—knowing that you’re going to be exhausted when the alarm goes off—is a sure-fire recipe for insomnia. You can use an alarm, but make sure you can’t see the time when you’re in bed.
* Take out any electronic devices to remove temptation should you wake.

# What to do if you wake?

* Practice self-hypnosis
  + Don’t get sucked into ruminations. If you mind wanders away from your self hypnosis just take it back.
  + If you think of something important that you don’t want to forget – keep a pen and paper by the bed and note it down.