Sleep and Insomnia

Create a regular relaxing bedtime routine:

• Update your to-do list if needed and then put it out of your mind.
• Choose relaxing, non-stimulating activities:
  o Read for enjoyment
  o Take a warm shower or bath
  o Gentle yoga or stretching
  o Listen to a guided meditation or relaxing music
  o Spend time with pets
  o Exchange shoulder massages with a roommate

Create a comfortable sleep environment:

• Reduce the amount of light coming from windows and electronics and/or wear an eye mask
• Keep room temperature slightly cool if possible
• Wear earplugs and/or use “white noise” if needed

Once you’re in bed:

• Let go of all thoughts. Remind yourself, “Nothing To Do, Nowhere To Go, No One To Be”
• Try breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided meditation
• If you can’t fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up and do a relaxing activity for a bit until you start to feel sleepy

Sleep tips:

• Maintain regular sleep and wake times as much as possible to set your internal clock
• Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex. If you must do other activities in your room, try to at least keep them out of your bed
• Don’t go to bed hungry or full
• Get a regular exercise, but not too close to bedtime
• Avoid caffeine 4-5 hours before bedtime. For some people, consuming any amount of caffeine at any time of day affects sleep negatively
• Avoid nicotine and alcohol close to bedtime (alcohol may help you get to sleep, but reduces overall quality of sleep)
• If you nap during the day, keep naps to 20-30 minutes
• Increase your exposure to sunlight, especially in the morning
• Avoid exposure to blue light from screens (TV, phone, tablet, computer) before bed, or install F.lux (justgetflux.com)
• Staring at your clock will increase anxiety. Turn it away from you, or hide it in a drawer

Contact us
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uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching

Make an appointment with a health coach
Online: etang.berkeley.edu
In-person: Appointment Office
Phone: 510-642-2000, press 4 then 1

“How much sleep do I need?”
It depends! Anywhere from 5-9 hours. If you feel rested and refreshed shortly after waking, you’ll know you’re getting enough sleep

“I’ve tried all of these tips and I still can’t sleep”
Consider keeping a “sleep diary” to look for patterns and possible explanations

If distressing thoughts are keeping you up and self-care techniques aren’t helping, consider counseling.