

# 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:
  - Read for enjoyment
  - Take a warm shower or bath
  - Gentle yoga or stretching
  - Listen to a guided meditation or relaxing music
  - Spend time with pets
  - 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

Health Promotion  
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[uhs.berkeley.edu/hp](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/hp)  
[uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/healthcoaching)

## Make an appointment with a health coach

Online: [etang.berkeley.edu](https://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.**