



HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Make sure that your bedroom is conducive to good sleep. Having the appropriate environment will help you fall asleep and stay asleep.

1. **Use your bed for sleeping only** – Learn to associate your bed with relaxation and not with activities like watching TV, working on a laptop, talking on the phone or eating.
2. **Remove technology from the bedroom** – If feasible, remove the TV or computer or other electronics from the bedroom. This eliminates:
 - a. the stimulus so you can focus on sleeping (see item 1 above)
 - b. the light that may interfere with sleep (see item 4 below)
3. **Remove your clock from view** - the light from a clock can affect sleep and it eliminates the temptation to “clock watch” while trying to fall asleep.
4. **Ensure a dark environment** - Unless you are reassured by having a night light in the room, your bedroom should be dark. It should remind you of a cave. Night shift workers may benefit from use of special curtains and liners that block out light from the outside.
5. **Ensure a quiet environment** – Occasional loud noises disturb sleep even if you cannot remember the noise upon waking. Use different measures to block out outside sounds such as:
 - a. Heavy curtains to block noise and light
 - b. Try earplugs that are ‘waxy’ and are capable of being molded to fit in the ear canal.
 - c. Utilize an answering machine and unplug the telephone in the bedroom.
 - d. Use something that generates white noise or a soft low-level noise such as a fan
 - e. Tranquil music composed for sleep induction, or sound machines with the sound of waterfalls, rain or the ocean are often used effectively to facilitate dozing off into natural sleep.
6. **Ensure a reasonably cool environment.** Overly warm bedrooms are not conducive to quality sleep. A slight lowering of body temperature signals the body to induce sleep.
7. **Ensure a clean environment-**
 - a. Ensure good ventilation, open windows whenever possible.
 - b. Avoid use of chemicals in your bedroom such hair spray, air fresheners, aftershave, flea sprays, mothballs, deodorizing products, nail polish and remover etc.
 - c. Vacuum and dust regularly, and change your air filters regularly.
8. **Invest in a comfortable mattress-** Most people spend over one third of their life in bed. Find a quality mattress that is firm but comfortable. An adjustable bed, that allows you to elevate your head 4-6 inches will take pressure off your diaphragm and will ease breathing during sleep. It will also help with acid reflux and nasal congestion.
9. **Invest in a good pillow** – Find one that is non-allergenic, and provides the proper support for your typical sleeping position, back or side. Try to find the thinnest pillow that still feels comfortable to you. This will allow for the best spine alignment.
10. **Use 100% cotton sheets** – Natural fibers such as cotton breathe better and are naturally allergen free. Be sure to wash the bed linens regularly.
11. **Wear comfortable bed clothes** – Wear something soft and non-restricting to bed. If what you are wearing is not comfortable, it won't matter how comfortable your bed is.
12. **Try aromatherapy** – The scent of essential oils such as almond, chamomile, lavender, rose or vanilla are said to have relaxing qualities. Try adding these oils to a warm bath just before bed or put a sachet with the scent under your pillow.