

The better sleep checklist

Slumber Number Challenge Health Information Fourth Quarter, 2015

Tips to Maximize your Slumber Number

Stick to a sleep schedule:

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, including the weekends. Enforcing a regular routine will support your body's sleep-wake cycle and promote better sleep.

Pay attention to what you eat and drink:

Try not to go to bed hungry or full. The discomfort can be a contributor in keeping you awake. Also try limiting your fluids around bedtime to keep you from waking up in the middle of the night to use the toilet.

Follow a bedtime ritual:

Doing the same thing every night before bed tells your body it's time to wind down. This will make the transition from wakefulness to sleepiness smoother. Some relaxing activities you may want to try are taking a warm bath or shower, listening to soothing music, and reading.

Get comfortable:

Sleep on a mattress and pillow that is comfortable and supportive. Good quality mattresses usually last about 9 to 10 years.

Limit daytime naps:

Long naps during the day can hinder your nighttime sleep. If you are going to take a nap during the daytime, limit yourself to 10-20 minutes.

Include physical activity in your daily routine:

Regular physical activity promotes better sleep and can help you fall asleep quicker. Although, if you exercise too close to your bedtime you may be too energized to fall asleep, so adjust your physical activity time accordingly.

Manage stress:

With too many thoughts about what needs to get done, and what is going on, your sleep can be affected. Try writing down what is on your mind and what needs to get done and set it aside for the next day.

Create a sleeping environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool:

Design a sleep environment that will meet your needs. Think about using dark shades, ear plugs, eye shades, and subtle background noise such as humidifiers, fans, and other devices that will create the sleeping environment you desire.

Avoid caffeine close to bedtime:

Caffeine is a stimulant and can make you more alert. Some people feel that caffeine does not affect them because it does not prevent them from falling asleep; however, it still can affect the quality of sleep they get.

**Avoid nicotine use close to bedtime:**

Nicotine is also a stimulant. Furthermore, when smokers sleep, they experience nicotine withdrawal symptoms which can disrupt their sleep and cause sleeping problems.

Avoid alcohol close to bedtime: Alcohol disrupts sleep and can cause nighttime awakenings. It also leads to a night of less restful sleep.

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Get Comfortable

Your Mattress - Is it too hard, too soft, or just right?

At night, it's impossible to find a comfortable position, but in the morning every position is comfortable. Do you find yourself in that situation night after night?

Sleeping on a comfortable, supportive mattress that fits you and your sleeping habits improves the quality of your sleep and makes you feel more energized. But beware, if you are sleeping on an old mattress that doesn't give you the support or comfort you need, you are putting yourself at risk for health problems such as backaches and sleep deprivation.

Your Pillow

Which type of pillow works best for your sleeping habits?

- Side sleeper: firm pillow
- Back sleeper: medium-firm pillow
- Stomach sleeper: soft pillow

Your Sheets

Which type of sheet will provide you with the most comfort?

- Cotton: tend to keep a cool temperature. The higher the thread count, the more luxurious
- Silk: soft and smooth, retain heat easily
- Flannel: warm and great for cool nights. The heavier the flannel the higher the quality

Create a Comfy Sleep Environment

Daylight regulates sleep patterns and can wake you up long before your alarm. The first step in making your comfy sleep environment is to make sure your room is as dark as possible when you sleep. Next, pay attention to the smell of your room. Certain smells can subconsciously connect you to memories or moods that may impact you throughout the night. In addition there are scents such as lavender that help promote sleep and relaxation.

Another thing to pay attention to is how you are using your bedroom space. Is it well organized? Your bedroom is the first and last thing you see each day. Is there clutter or clothing that could be removed? Your bedroom space should be a calming environment, so try to keep clutter to a minimum, keep floor free of clothing and other items, and make the space meaningful with what is important to you in your life. Lastly, make sure to only use your bed for sleep!

Source: BetterSleep.org