Practicing Good Sleep Hygiene

How did you sleep last night? If you are like many other Americans, you may still be feeling tired and sluggish after struggling to get a good night's rest. In a 24/7 culture with the internet holding most of our attention and time, tuning out to sleep can sometimes feel impossible.

As many adults struggle to get quality rest, sleep hygiene is becoming more and more important for our health. Follow the tips below to improve your sleep hygiene and rest better.

Create and Maintain a Routine
Whether you are in an office from 9-5 or work an overnight shift, try following a consistent sleep schedule. Plan to go to bed and set your alarm for the same times each day. Your sleep schedule, when routine, can reset your body's internal clock, allowing for a deeper, more restful sleep. When possible, keep weekend sleep schedules within 20 minutes of your sleep and wake-up times during the week to synchronize your internal clock.

Break Your Snooze Habit
Even though hitting the snooze button may bring you satisfaction in the early hours, snoozing your alarm is the wrong way to start your day. Sleeping for just a few minutes more causes you to slip into a fragmented sleep pattern, leading you to feel more lethargic throughout the day and potentially impacting your ability to sleep well throughout the night.

Watch What You Eat and Drink
Eating before bed is bad for your digestive system as well as your sleep hygiene. Avoid late-

night meals when possible, especially high-fat foods. Avoid caffeine after 2 pm as any afternoon or evening stimulants can dramatically impact your ability to fall and stay asleep. Avoid coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, caffeinated pain relievers, and tobacco products in the evening. Alcohol may act as a depressant, but drinking within three hours of bedtime can also lead to poor sleep quality. Causing restlessness and fragmented sleep patterns, alcohol can ruin your rest and dampen your morning.

Nap Early or Not at All

Short naps have been linked to improved energy and productivity. Napping too long, late or frequently, though, can dramatically impact your sleep quality. Resting when you are feeling overtired may be beneficial, but late-day naps may impact your sleep schedule and lead to insomnia or disrupted sleep patterns. If you do need a nap, try to fit in a few minutes of rest before 5 pm.

Set the Scene

One main cause for insomnia lies in distractions. From checking emails to worrying about the next day's tasks, distractions keep your mind moving and prevent restful sleep. Try to disconnect early and create a bedtime routine that promotes relaxation. Take a bath, read a book, or practice meditation for an hour prior to lying down. Do your best to avoid focusing on stressful topics or activities and allow yourself to wind down before trying to sleep.

Exercise Early

Daily exercise promotes restful, deep sleep. Exercising in the evening, though, can leave you feeling too awake and energized to fall asleep naturally. Even just 30 minutes of cardio can raise your temperature for up to four hours, ultimately hindering the body's natural cooling process in preparation for sleep. Exercising in the morning gives you an immediate energy boost upon waking, and allows the body to wind down as the day ends.

Create Morning Excitement

Crawling out of bed, especially on a cold or rainy day, is not fun. As tempting as it is to stay wrapped in your comforter for five more minutes, getting up and ready for the day upon waking is the best way to get your blood flowing and build energy for the day ahead. If you are not a morning person, plan breakfast or exercises that get you excited about waking up. Prep a healthy smoothie bowl and layout your newest workout outfit, or set the coffee pot to begin warming just before your alarm goes off so the smell gives you a reason to rise and shine.

To reach a Behavioral Health or Work/Life Expert, contact eni at:

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