

# 10 TIPS for BETTER SLEEP

## 1 Go to bed at the right time



Set a bedtime and don't get into bed before it. Choose a later bedtime if you are spending a lot of time in bed awake. Stay up past your bedtime if not sleepy.



## 2 The ≈20 minute rule



Does your mind race after turning off the light? You can end this nightly pattern by leaving the bed when it takes too long, about 20 minutes or so, to fall asleep (or fall back to sleep). Do something relaxing and return to bed when sleepy. Repeat as needed. **Important:** Don't look at the clock. Estimate when you think it is time to leave the bed.



## 3 Get up each morning at the same time



If you can, sleep until it is your planned time to rise and start your day. Don't sleep or stay in bed past your rise time, regardless of how late you were up the night before.



## 4 Nap wisely



Don't nap if you don't need to. Avoid napping by getting active (ex. 20-minute walk). When a nap can't be avoided, limit yourself to a 10-20 minute power nap. Finish your nap before 3 pm.



## 5 Spend less time in bed



Do you spend a lot of time awake in bed *hoping* for sleep? This can lead to tension and sleep anxiety making it harder to sleep. Spending *less* time in bed (temporarily) can lead to the unexpected benefit of a better sleep with fewer interruptions. As your sleep improves, gradually extend your time in bed using a sleep diary to track your sleep.



## 6 Distract your mind



It is hard to fall asleep when your mind is active – worrying about finances, health, relationships, or tomorrow's to-do list. Give your mind a chance to slow down and let sleep take over. Try these distraction techniques to help you fall asleep:

- *Grocery cart exercise:* using your imagination, slowly walk through a grocery store and fill your cart, paying close, detailed attention to each item you select.
- *Word list challenge:* think of a 5-letter word and come up with 5-10 words that start with each letter of the word. Add variety by choosing a theme – animals, names, cities, etc.



## 7 Take time to relax



Before getting into bed, there are many ways to prepare your body and mind for sleep. Add a relaxation technique to your bedtime routine that lets you do this. Examples include: low light reading before getting into bed, the 4-7-8 breathing exercise, and toe-to-head progressive muscle tightening and relaxing.



## 8 Make being in bed about being asleep



Use your bed only for sleep, sex, and sickness. Avoid reading, writing, socializing, working, or snuggling with pets in bed. Turn off screens well before getting into bed.



## 9 Bust your sleep myths



*Worrying* about getting enough sleep can actually keep you up at night. Needing 8 hours of sleep every night is a myth. Less than 7 is enough for some. Most feel well rested with 7 to 9 hours a night. What are your sleep myths? Busting them might be a part of what helps you sleep.



## 10 Healthy sleep habits start during the day



Having an active body and mind during the day is important for your mental, physical, and sleep health. This starts with bright light in the morning. Can you add more light right after waking up and more daytime activities that energize your body and mind?



Control



Sleep Drive



Relax



Thoughts



Hygiene

These 10 tips come from the 5 components of cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBTi), which is the #1 recommended treatment for insomnia. CBTi is not sleep hygiene. It is an effective sleep therapy that treats insomnia and keeps it from returning. The examples included here are part of what you will see when you complete a CBTi program. Visit Sleepwell Recommends at [mysleepwell.ca](https://mysleepwell.ca) to select a CBTi program that's right for you.