

# Sleep Hygiene

*I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. Ps 3:5*

Our fast-paced, achievement-driven culture has undermined our sleep patterns. This, in turn, damages our health. Problems ranging from transient mood disorders to a weakened immune system to incidents of psychosis can be traced to sleep deprivation. It is important to develop good habits which promote nightly relaxation. Read over the suggestions below and check the boxes next to the practices which are **already** a part of your life.

- Go to bed at the same time each night and sleep until the same time each morning. Set your phone alarm to warn you an hour before bed.
- Be intentional about the things you do and do not do for **one hour before your bed time**.
- No personal electronic media before bed, including texting, iPad movies or audio books using headphones. Exceptions: soft music; a relaxing television show watched from at least 8 feet away.
- Do something to calm yourself physically. Read a book, drink herbal tea or take a hot bath.
- Control the temperature in your bedroom. Most people sleep better in cool temperatures, under a blanket.
- Avoid caffeine after noon if you have trouble sleeping at night.
- If you take medication, such as an antidepressant, ask your doctor if taking it at a different time of day might help.
- Exercise promotes sleep, but energetic exercise should be done in the morning or early afternoon.
- Don't eat anything within the last hour before bed.
- Scientists believe that daily exposure to natural light promotes a healthy sleep cycle, so try to get outside for a while each day.
- Do not allow your problems to follow you to bed. Refuse to ponder certain topics, such as work, family issues or health problems in your bedroom.
- Develop a calming meditation routine which you practice regularly before sleep. For example, visualize a scripture passage like Psalm 23. Experience being in a green pasture with your Great Shepherd. Walk your way through all the verses.

Are there any new habits you would like to try?

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Are there things you need to remove from your daily routine?

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