

SLEEP HYGIENE CHECKLIST

EVIDENCE-BASED HABITS FOR BETTER SLEEP

Sleep is one of the most powerful recovery tools available. During sleep, the body repairs tissue, consolidates learning, regulates the immune system, and resets its stress response.

The checklist below reflects current evidence on habits and behaviors that support better sleep quality and duration. Choose one or two items that feel manageable and begin there. Build the habit, then add another. Small, consistent changes compound over time.

Schedule & Habits

- ☐ Set a consistent bedtime aligned with your natural sleep window
- ☐ Keep a consistent wake time every day, including weekends (within ~1 hour)
- ☐ Go to bed only when genuinely drowsy
- ☐ Nap only if needed, and keep naps under 20 minutes, earlier in the day
- ☐ Get bright natural light exposure within the first hour of waking

Environment

- ☐ Think of the bedroom as a sleep sanctuary — every choice about light, temperature, sound, and how you use the space is in service of making the room itself a cue for sleep and rest
- ☐ Keep the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- ☐ Use the bed only for sleep, relaxation practices, and sex

The Wind-Down Routine

- ☐ Begin a 30-minute wind-down routine before bed (reading, light stretching, relaxation, or meditation). *Keep the sequence consistent each night; the routine itself becomes a sleep cue*
- ☐ Take a warm bath or shower 1–2 hours before bed (the resulting drop in core body temperature afterward actively promotes sleep onset)
- ☐ Take 15–20 minutes in the early evening to write down any worries and potential responses. *This reduces the likelihood of rumination at bedtime*
- ☐ Reflect on the day and make a plan for tomorrow in the early evening, not right before bed
- ☐ Dim overhead lighting 1–2 hours before bed and shift to warmer, lower light sources
- ☐ Write down anything on your mind; keep a notepad beside the bed to clear mental clutter
- ☐ Avoid screens, news, and stimulating content during the wind-down and after

Substances & Lifestyle

- ☐ Reduce fluid intake 2–3 hours before bed to minimize nighttime waking (more if frequent waking to use the bathroom is a problem)
- ☐ Have a light snack if hungry (going to bed hungry can disrupt sleep)
- ☐ Avoid caffeine after early afternoon (roughly 2pm)
- ☐ Avoid alcohol close to bedtime (it disrupts sleep architecture even if it aids onset)
- ☐ Avoid tobacco or nicotine use, particularly close to bedtime (nicotine is a stimulant)
- ☐ Exercise regularly, but avoid vigorous exercise within 2–3 hours of bedtime

If you can't sleep

- ☐ If you haven't fallen asleep after approximately 20–30 minutes, get out of bed
- ☐ Do something quiet and non-stimulating in dim light until drowsy, then return to bed
- ☐ Avoid watching the clock