Sleep hygiene includes daily practices that result in a regular pattern of adequate sleep. It starts with morning routine and includes diet and exercise habits and realistic ideas about the importance of sleep.

**Sleep and Mental Health**

Sleep is essential for many basic human needs that promote mental health:

- Allows the brain and the body to heal
- Reduces stress that can lead to chronic disease, which can trigger depression
- Improves mood, alertness, problem solving, concentration, judgment, memory and appetite
- Decreases impulsivity and susceptibility to distraction

**Tips for Sleep Hygiene**

- Go to bed and get up at the same times every day, even on weekends.
- Dim lights an hour before bedtime. Keep the bedroom dark and cool while sleeping. Brighten lights as soon as you wake up.
- Don’t go to bed hungry or too full.
- Limit or avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine. These all can disrupt sleep.
- The light emitted by electronics can suppress production of melatonin, a hormone that supports sleep.
- Exercise regularly, but not close to bedtime.
- Manage stress so the brain is calm before sleep.
- Use the bedroom only for sleep and sex.

**Online Resources**

National Sleep Foundation  
[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)

Sleep Health Foundation  
[www.sleephealthfoundation.org](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org)

Sleep Medicine  
[www.healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep](http://www.healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/sleep/](http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/)

**Ask your behavioral health/medical provider:**

- How do I know if I have poor sleep hygiene?
- Is it possible to develop good sleep hygiene if I work a night shift?
- What do I do if better sleep hygiene doesn’t work for me?
- Can I take sleep medications instead of worrying about sleep hygiene?

**75% of people who say anxiety and stress interrupt their sleep also say their sleep problems increase their anxiety and stress.**

**SLEEP & STRESS**

Many people find stressful thoughts prevent the peace of mind needed to relax. Sleep experts recommend a “worry log” to cope with the overactive mind.

- Set aside time before bed to write down your worries and an action list to handle them the next day.
- Leave the notebook by your bedside so you can add to it if you wake up with more worries.
- Return to the notebook every day. You’ll begin to find relief in trusting it as a reliable reminder tool.
- Ask yourself if worrying about something you can’t address until the next day will help you get the sleep you need.