

Sleep better.

Below is a condensed list of sleep tips from a variety of sleep researchers and studies - let's skip the scientific talk, these are all action items. Implement as many as you find helpful, as they make sense for you and your own health.

Sweet dreams!

- Make your bedroom dark. Really dark. Get rid of any gadgets that you can see glowing when you turn the light off. Get light-blocking blinds and/or curtains if there is light peeking in at night. If you really can't eliminate everything, find a safe way to cover it or try a sleep mask that you find comfortable.
- Make your bedroom quiet. Close doors, get rid of more gadgets, get sound-blocking curtains (yes, they're surprisingly helpful), etc. If there are sounds you cannot eliminate, try comfortable earplugs, or a white noise machine or app (e.g., White Noise by TMSoft).
- Stop doing things in bed that the bed is not for – i.e., no working, checking email, eating, watching TV.
- Be cool. You shouldn't be too warm when you sleep. Find a temperature that works for you and program your thermostat accordingly or adjust before you go to bed. Avoid blankets that will make you too hot. Try cooler or wicking sheets. Make sure your pajamas are a cool, breathable fabric (many are not!). If you're feeling too warm when you get in bed, research says sticking a leg out of the blanket for a bit can cool you down faster.
- But make sure your feet are not cold. If they are, find comfortable socks for bed that keep them a good temperature. Again, look for breathable material.
- Try to keep an 8-hour buffer between your last caffeine of the day and your bedtime. Instead, you can try some relaxing, non-caffeinated tea in the evening, like chamomile tea.
- Don't eat before bed. Leave a 3-hour buffer between your last meal of the day and bedtime. That can be really tough when you're working late, but do your best to avoid eating close to bedtime.
- Turn screens off before bed. This is a tough one, but there are some really scary research articles and that show how much this can mess with your sleep. Try keeping at least an hour buffer (2 or 3 would be great!) of screen-free time before bed. Sometimes it's hard to avoid, but you can at least dim the brightness on your computer or phone if you can't avoid them altogether. If TV relaxes you before bed, try a podcast instead.
- Have a bedtime routine and know when it starts. Do the same things in the same order each night before you go to bed. Maybe you already do - if so, chances are those things take you the same amount of time every day. Know what time you need to start your routine to be in bed on time and stick to that cutoff.
- Speaking of sticking to cutoffs, don't hit the snooze button. (I know, that was the meanest thing anyone has ever said to you.) But snoozing is bad for you. You will just be late and more tired. Don't leave a "snooze buffer" either. Just get up when you need to.