



TIPS for Patients

Tips for Better Sleep

If you are having trouble sleeping, follow these simple suggestions for getting a better night of rest.

Establish a routine. Go to bed and awaken at the same time every day (including weekends).

Relax before bedtime. Establish a calming nighttime ritual, such as meditation, reading, listening to soothing music, or taking a warm bath.

Create a room that is ideal for sleeping. Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, cool, comfortable, and free of distractions.

Exercise. Regular exercise usually makes it easier to fall asleep. Schedule exercise in the morning or early afternoon.

Eat right. Don't go to bed hungry, but avoid heavy meals before bedtime. Also, avoid fluids after 8 PM. This will reduce the need to go to the bathroom during the night.

Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol. Avoid caffeine for eight hours before bedtime. Although a cigarette or a drink may help relax you, each can disrupt sleep cycles.

Avoid napping. Napping can make matters worse if you have trouble sleeping. If you do nap, keep it short (15 to 20 minutes).

Don't lie in bed awake. If you can't fall asleep after a half hour, get out of bed and do a quiet, nonstimulating activity. Go back to bed when you feel tired.

Use your bed only for sleep and sex. Avoid using the bed as a comfortable place for watching television, working on a laptop computer, reading, eating, doing paperwork, having in-depth conversations, etc.

Keep a sleep journal. Recording the circumstances surrounding a good and bad night of sleep can help identify patterns that trigger sleeplessness.

Consider your bedding. Is your mattress comfortable and supportive? Are your pillows, sheets, and blankets conducive to a restful night's sleep?

This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at info@neurologyreviews.com.

