



Healthy Sleep Habits

It is important for proper pain management to have a restful sleep. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night to function at their best.

Benefits of a good sleep include:

- Improved memory, attention to details, decision making and response time
- Improved tissue repair, growth and healing
- Improved immune system function and ability to fight infection
- Improved regulation of insulin, which helps control blood sugar levels, food cravings and body weight
- Improved regulation of stress hormones, which helps improve mood, makes us less irritable and less prone to depression

Follow these tips to achieve good sleep and the benefits it provides:

The DO's

- Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule, including weekends
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine. Allow enough time to wind down before going to bed. Find a relaxing activity, such as reading or listening to music, or take a hot bath, which can help muscles relax and make you feel drowsy
- Get a minimum of 8 hours of sleep per night with a bedtime before midnight; Quality of sleep going to be before 12am is much better than after 12am and you will feel more rested with the same amount of sleep
- Create a sleep conducive environment that is dark, comfortable, cool and free of distractions or noise

- Get exposure to bright sun in the morning and sleep in a dark room. Light and darkness are important cues that help program your body clock
- Dim the lights in the evening; this will tell your body that bedtime is approaching. If you don't have a dark room to sleep in, consider using an eye mask that blocks light until you have gotten enough sleep
- Treat your bed as your sanctuary from stresses of the day and use your bed for sleep only, so you positively associate your bed with sleeping
- Exercise regularly; best to complete your workout at least a few hours before bedtime

The DON'Ts:

- Avoid stimulating activities right before bed, such as exciting TV/movies, gaming and screen time
- Do not eat a large meal close to bedtime. Your body cannot rest while digesting a large meal. Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your regular bedtime and avoid drinking too many fluids
- Avoid caffeine close to bedtime as it can keep you awake; it can take 6-12 hours for caffeine to leave the system (e.g. coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate)
- Avoid alcohol close to bedtime; it can interfere with deep sleep and cause waking when the effects of alcohol have worn off
- Avoid taking late naps; naps help make up for lost sleep but late afternoon naps make it harder to fall asleep at night. If you must nap, keep it to under an hour and before 3:00pm

If you continue having problems, consider

- Using a sleep diary to record your sleep habits and activity, AND
- Discussing problems with your doctor to help treat the problem or refer to a sleep specialist

(Adapted from the National Sleep Foundation "Healthy Sleep Tips" and "Guide to Sleeping Well", which can be found at <https://sleepfoundation.org/>)

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