

Sleep Tips: Boost your Natural Circadian Rhythms and Improve your Sleep

Establish a Fixed Awakening Time

Wake up at the same time every day (weekends, too) no matter how well or how poorly you have slept. This allows your circadian rhythms to consistently signal your brain and body chemistry to attain a regular sleep rhythm. It might feel good to sleep in when you “don’t have anything to do” for the day, but it disrupts your circadian rhythms, making it harder to fall asleep and wake up in the future.

Wake Up Properly

Expose your eyes to the morning light and get some food. These are two more strong signals to your brain that your day has begun. Face the sun or sit near a bright window when you wake or while eating breakfast for 5-15 minutes. If the sun isn’t up yet, try getting a blue light to use. These are two powerful steps in establishing your circadian sleep wake clock.

Set Up Your Night for Success

Preparing for sleep means clearing the path so your brain and body know what is coming. Here are five ways to encourage this:

1. Spend time outdoors during the day. Rain, shine, snow or heat, your brain operates better when you go outdoors during the day.
2. Avoid or finish alcohol or cannabis hours before bedtime. The more you consume, the longer it takes for your body to be ready to sleep effectively.
3. Finish intense or exciting things 2 hours before bedtime (movies, writing a paper with a midnight deadline, etc.)
4. Finish exercise at least 2 hours before bed. This allows your internal body temperature to cool (essential to sleep) before bed.
5. End bright lights 2 hours before bed. Low light is fine, but not bright lights.