

Sleep Hygiene and Relaxation Plan

This plan integrates sleep hygiene education, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), and additional relaxation techniques to help **improve** your sleep quality and **increase** REM sleep through a combination of environmental adjustments, behavioral habits, and relaxation techniques.

1 CORE SLEEP HYGIENE PRACTICES (DAILY)

Goal: Create optimal conditions for consistent, restful sleep and support the natural sleep cycle.

Sleep Schedule

- Set a consistent bedtime and wake time—even on weekends.
- Aim for 7–9 hours of sleep nightly.

- Cool, dark, and quiet room.
- Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask.
- Remove electronic devices or set them to "Do Not Disturb."

Bedroom Environment

Bed Use

- Only use the bed for sleep and intimacy.
- Avoid watching TV, eating, or scrolling on your phone in bed.

- Establish a 30-minute wind-down routine with dim lighting.
- Avoid screens, caffeine, and alcohol 2–3 hours before bed.

Pre-Sleep Routine

Daytime Habits

- Get 20–30 minutes of morning sunlight daily.
- Engage in daily physical activity (avoid intense workouts within 2 hours of bedtime).



PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR) *(NIGHTLY, 20 MINUTES)*

Goal: Reduce physical tension and promote parasympathetic nervous system activation for sleep.

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP ONE

Lie in bed or sit comfortably. Close your eyes.

STEP TWO

Inhale slowly and deeply for a count of 4, hold for 2, and exhale for 6.

STEP THREE

Focus on one muscle group at a time—starting from the feet and working up to the head.

STEP FOUR

Tense each muscle group for 5–7 seconds, then release and exhale.

STEP FIVE

Notice the contrast between tension and relaxation.

STEP SIX

Common Sequence:

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| • Feet | • Glutes | • Hands | • Neck |
| • Calves | • Abdomen | • Arms | • Jaw |
| • Thighs | • Chest | • Shoulders | • Forehead |

FINAL STEP

After completing all groups, breathe deeply for 2–3 minutes, focusing on the feeling of relaxation.

3 ADDITIONAL RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

(ROTATE AS NEEDED)

Mindfulness Meditation

(10–15 mins daily)

- Use guided apps like Insight Timer, Calm or Headspace.
- Focus on breathing, bodily sensations, or sounds without judgment.

Visualization or Guided Imagery

(Nightly or as needed)

- Picture a peaceful, relaxing place (e.g., beach, forest, mountains).
- Engage all senses—what do you see, hear, smell, feel?

4-7-8 Breathing Technique

(As part of bedtime routine)

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7, exhale for 8.
- Repeat for 4 cycles to slow the heart rate and reduce anxiety.

Body Scan Meditation

(Optional on nights with high stress)

- Mentally “scan” your body from head to toe, noting areas of tension without trying to change them.
- Breathe into tense areas and allow them to soften.

Weekly Reflection and Adjustment

Keep a sleep journal for tracking:

- Bedtime and wake time
- Nighttime awakenings
- Quality of sleep (1–10 scale)
 - Techniques used
- Mood/energy upon waking

Review weekly to refine what’s working and address barriers.