



THINKWISE TIPS FOR SLEEPING WELL

1. **Develop a good sleep routine** – To regulate your body clock go to bed and get up at a regular time throughout the week and at weekends. This can help you to fall asleep more easily and stay asleep for the night.
2. **Wind down before bed** – stay away from bright lights and anything that is likely to cause excitement, stress or anxiety before bed. Doing something relaxing like reading or mindful meditation will make it easier to fall asleep. Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode so spending the hour before bed doing something calming and away from technology is a good idea.
3. **Avoid naps** – It may feel like napping helps you get through the day but it impacts on your ability to sleep at night. If you feel sleepy in the afternoon, raise your energy levels by doing something active and energetic. This will help with getting to sleep later on.
4. **Exercise daily** – Any kind of exercise during the day will help with sleep but avoid vigorous exercise just before bed.
5. **Set your room up right** – Make sure your bedroom has the best environment to help you sleep. It should be cool, ideally between 16-19 degrees is best. It should also be quiet and dark, using blackout curtains, an eye mask or ear plugs can help.
6. **Supportive mattress and pillows** – make sure your mattress is supportive and replace it as necessary, most manufacturers recommend replacement every 7-8 years. Comfy pillows are also a necessity. Making your sleep environment as comfortable and inviting as possible seems obvious but also consider keeping it free of clutter and allergens.
7. **Compliment your circadian rhythms** – avoid bright white light in the evenings and expose yourself to daylight in the morning. This helps to regulate your melatonin production which aids sleep.
8. **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and heavy meals in the evening** - Alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine can all disrupt sleep. Eating big or spicy meals can cause discomfort from indigestion that can make it hard to sleep. If you can, avoid eating large meals for two to three hours before bedtime.
9. **Get up if you can't sleep** - Staying in bed for too long if you are unable to sleep will increase anxiety and create an association between bed and stress. If you do not feel able to sleep, it is best to get up and do something relaxing and try again when you feel ready. It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment and use your bed only for sleep to strengthen the association between bed and sleep. If you associate a particular activity or item with anxiety about sleeping, omit it from your bedtime routine.
10. **Seek help** - It can help to complete a sleep diary to help you identify triggers and patterns for sleep issues. But if the problem persists speak to your GP about available support.