

LAYLA

Trouble Sleeping?

Whether you're losing sleep over racing thoughts, tossing or turning, having trouble falling or staying asleep, experiencing daytime sleepiness, or waking up many times in the night, you're not alone.

Let's talk solutions. Poor sleep can have far-reaching effects on overall mental health and wellness. If you're experiencing sleep issues, give some of the strategies listed below a try!

- Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day (give or take 1 hour)
- Reduce your caffeine intake and alcohol consumption! This includes coffee, tea, energy drinks, hot chocolate and caffeinated sodas
- Avoid eating heavy meals in the 3 hours before bedtime or going to bed on an empty stomach – have a light snack to satisfy your hunger instead
- Practice relaxation exercises (e.g. deep breathing, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation)
- Try setting aside 'worry time' at least one hour before bed each day to write down issues that are bothering/concerning you, then practice leaving them behind until tomorrow
- Exercise regularly. For some, exercising before bed makes them tired, while for others, it's energizing. Monitor your own responses and do what works best for you
- Develop a bedtime routine (e.g. relaxing, stretching, warm shower, deep breathing, reading)
- Refrain from looking at screens for 30–60 minutes before bed
- Consider using a blue light filter on your devices
- If you can't sleep after 20 minutes of trying, get up and do a quiet activity until you're tired
- Resist the urge to nap!
- Going to sleep early and waking up frequently in the night? Try shifting your bedtime an hour or so later to reduce sleep disturbances
- Set the proper conditions for sleep: make sure the bedroom is completely dark, get comfortable (how's your pillow and mattress?), and make sure the bedroom is the right temperature (think Goldilocks: not too hot, not too cold!)



Remember, sleeping well is a learnable habit! Small changes can have big effects!

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Still having trouble? Consider a sleep calendar!

Creating a sleep calendar to track your sleep cycle and potential contributing factors can help you to determine the best course of action for your specific challenges and circumstances.

Things you may want to note on your calendar: sleep/wake-up times, sleep quality, diet, caffeine and alcohol intake, exercise, notable stressors, sleep disruptions (e.g., loud construction), and any sleep strategies you tried. No need to track all, just what you feel may be relevant for you.

Resources

The following self-help resources may be helpful if you are interested in learning more.

Books: More Sleepless Nights by Peter Hauri and Shirley Linde

Apps: Headspace, Noisli, Pzizz, Slumber, Calm, Sleep Cycle, 10% Happier, Reflectly



Please note that this handout should not be considered as or substituted for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Layla is not a healthcare provider so your use of this article is at your own risk. If you or someone you know are in need of immediate care, are in crisis or danger of harm, call 911 or proceed to your nearest emergency room immediately.

If you are experiencing extreme sleep issues that disrupt everyday life and the solutions provided on this tips sheet have proven unhelpful, please consult a licensed professional for further support.