Tips for a Good Night’s Rest

In order for you to get the most effective sleep, you can:

- **Create a comfortable sleeping environment** (no noise, room temperature, darkness).
- **Do not go to bed stuffed or starving** (eat at least 2 hours before bed, small snack before bed is OK).
- **Get some exercise** (it’s ideal to exercise in the morning or afternoon; physical activity just before bedtime may create stimulation that impacts your sleep).
- **Put away the alcohol** (alcohol increases frequency and intensity of sleeping and breathing disorders).
- **Go decaf** (allow at least 5-7 hours to process the last beverage before your planned bed time).
- **Check and monitor all medications** (find out effects of all drugs, including herbal supplements).
- **Leave the worries at the door** (try relaxation methods such as, meditation and breathing exercise).
- **Establish a pre-sleep routine and ritual** (go to bed at a certain time).
- **Do not try to fall asleep.** Just allow it to happen!

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**How do I contact the center for work and family life (CWFL)?**

If you are a USC staff or faculty member and are interested in scheduling an appointment with a counselor or receiving information regarding resources and referrals, phone CWFL at **(213) 821-0800**

If you are an immediate family member of a USC employee, you may also be eligible for services. CWFL services are available at UPC & HSC campuses by appointment.

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**Improving Sleep is Improving Overall Health**

For related tools & articles, visit CWFL’s Sleep Resource page at http://bit.ly/cwflsleephygiene

**For a comprehensive sleep evaluation, please contact the USC Sleep Disorders Center**

**Call (800) USC-CARE (800-872-2273)**

http://www.keckmedicine.org/sleep-disorders/

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University of Southern California
Center for Work and Family Life
Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Phone: (213) 821-0800
Fax: (213) 747-8304

University Park Campus
Figueroa Building
3535 South Figueroa, Suite 202
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1263

USC Employee Assistance Program
www.usc.edu/worklife
**Improving Sleep Hygiene**

**What is Sleep Hygiene?**

Sleep hygiene is a variety of different practices that are necessary to have restful, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness.

**Why is it Important to Practice Good Sleep Hygiene?**

Poor sleep habits are among the most common problems encountered in our society and the effects of sleep deprivation can be quite detrimental.

**Some of the Consequences:**

- Deceased Performance and Alertness
- Memory and Cognitive Impairment
- Stress in Relationships
- Poor Quality of Life
- Poor Quality of Health
- Occupational Injury
- Automobile Injury

**Long Term Consequences:**

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack, heart failure and stroke
- Obesity and increased risk for diabetes
- Depressed immune functioning
- Hormone dysregulation: essential for regulating growth/repair and wakefulness/alertness
- Exacerbation of physical, mental or emotional problems: anxiety and depression, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

**Typical Signs of Insufficient Sleep**

- Daytime sleepiness—lack of alertness, nodding off or daydreaming on tasks is often blamed on boring or monotonous tasks when really it is sleep deprivation.
- Habitually sleeping less than you ‘think or feel’ that you need also know as insufficient sleep.
- Unplanned naps and sleeping longer on days off.
- Insomnia: Difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, & difficulty waking up in the morning.
- Contributing factors to insufficient sleep include: Fear, worry, frustration, disturbing thoughts, depression/anxiety and behaviors incompatible with “natural sleep” patterns and cycles.
- Do you snore? Loud disruptive snoring, gasping arousal, morning headaches or daytime sleepiness can be signs of more serious sleep programs. Ask your doctor if sleep testing is necessary.

**Where to Begin for Better Sleep**

1) **Determine your Sleep Needs**

   - Create a sleep log to track your bed & wake times.
   - Keep track also of diet and daily activities that might contribute to sleep disturbance.

2) **It’s Essential to Establish Rhythm & Regularity**

   - We are creatures of habit by nature designed to consistently establish a healthy equilibrium automatically and systematically.
   - Work with, not against, your built-in biological clocks (circadian rhythms – naturally modulate our sleep and wakefulness).
   - Listen to your body. For example if you are having trouble keeping your eyes open—go to sleep!

**Quick Strategies to Falling Sleep**

- **Read something** - The key is not to stimulate your mind.
- **Count backwards from 100** - Combine this with breathing techniques.
- **Use the alphabet** – Playing counting or listing games can distract your mind from overthinking and tire it to sleep.
- **Make yourself sleepy** - Helps your body remember how drowsiness feels.
- **Replay** - Recount positive events of your day or a favorite movie to lull your mind to exhaustion.
- **Progressive Relaxation** - Destressing technique used for insomnia, relaxes your muscles one by one.
- **Let go of your body** - Two methods of body relaxation, melting and floating.
- **Write it down** - Method to let go of racing thoughts and a mind circling around worries.
- **Releasing worries** - Instead of thinking of worries in a negative tone change these thoughts into positive requests.
- **Mind imagery** - Exercise that takes advantage of random images that slip into mind when tired.