

## 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!

## 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.

**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/>

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

Phone: (213) 821-0800  
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# SLEEP HYGIENE

USC Center for  
Work & Family Life

USC  
Employee Assistance Program  
[www.usc.edu/worklife](http://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:

- Decreased 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 known 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 problems. 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.