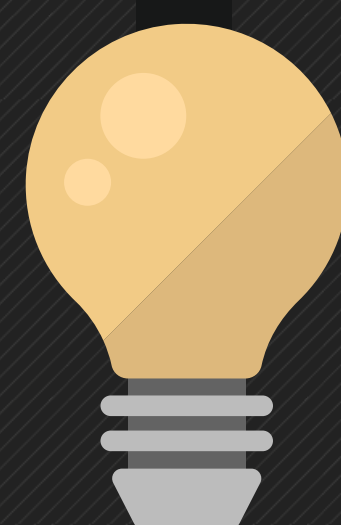




General healthy practices for sleep



#1

Regular time for going to bed and waking

Try to maintain the same waking time even if occasionally the bed time is altered due to some reason.

The symptoms of depression may make it difficult to maintain a routine bedtime and waking time. But work towards a viable routine.

#2

To develop a routine during the hours leading up to bedtime

A fixed winding-down routine will cue the brain that its time to sleep. For instance, you might plan to shut down the computer/TV/ and switch on dim light, play soft music, brush teeth and wash your face/do a relaxation exercise etc. so that the whole process helps you to wind down.

After planning a routine/ritual that suits you: Repeat it in the same order, same time daily.

#3

Regular exposure to outdoor bright lights

Bright light is an important cue to set our internal clock.

It is helpful to maintain enough gap of time from exposure to the bright light during the day time much before the sleep hours and then exposure to bright light again upon waking up.

#4

Associate bed, bed room and bed time with rest, relaxation and sleep

Try to de-link the bed (and if possible also the bedroom) from other activities like eating, heated discussion, physical exercise, television, working on laptop/using your mobile phone etc. This is perhaps one of the most important healthy long time practices you can cultivate.

#5

Regular exercise during the day

Regular exercise during the day can help in facilitating sleep as well as in managing depression. However, avoid exercise close to bed time.

#6

Avoid sleeping in the afternoons

Sleeping or even lying down in bed in the afternoons can be a temptation. This can be especially true when one is feeling depressed and has not been sleeping well in the night. But do not try to compensate for poor sleep in the night by sleeping during day time. This will make it difficult to set right the sleep-wake cycle. If at all, you have to take a nap in the afternoon, keep it brief.

#7

Avoid eating close to bed time

Eating, especially a heavy meal close to bedtime is unhelpful.