

What is Sleep Hygiene?

'Sleep hygiene' describes modifiable behaviours and environmental adjustments that can be used to promote sleep quality and improve sleep duration. Although 'sleep hygiene' is commonly used in research, and sleep hygiene advice is commonly provided as an intervention for inadequate sleep, there is no clear consensus as to what factors constitute sleep hygiene.

Extensive research has led to evidence-based guidelines that offer long-term solutions for sleep difficulties.

While medications can help with insomnia and other sleep disparities, they are typically effective only in the short term. Long-term use may lead to dependence and hinder the development of natural sleep habits. Consult a healthcare professional to determine the best approach for you, but prioritizing adequate sleep hygiene—whether alone or alongside medication or cognitive behavioral therapy—is key to managing insomnia effectively.

Sleep Challenges in Women

Women often face unique sleep challenges due to hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and menopause, which can lead to insomnia, daytime sleepiness and restless sleep. Stress, caregiving responsibilities, and mental health concerns further impact sleep quality.

Given these factors, it is crucial for women to establish healthy sleep hygiene by maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, and managing stress effectively. Prioritizing good sleep habits supports overall health, hormonal balance, and emotional well-being, helping women feel more energized and resilient in their daily lives.

This brochure is intended for adult women primarily in their reproductive age without severe gynecological or sleep disorders and is not a substitute for medical advice. If you experience significant sleep difficulties or menstrual health concerns, please consult a healthcare professional for personalized guidance and treatment.

References:

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More than just a Beauty Sleep Strategies to support Sleep in Women



Get to know your Sleep

Track your sleep for eight weeks to identify patterns affected by hormones, stress, and lifestyle. Use a journal or app to note sleep quality, bedtime routines, and energy levels. Understanding these trends helps you adjust habits for better, more restorative sleep.

Consistency is Key

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day— even on weekends—helps regulate your body's internal clock. A steady routine improves sleep quality, making it easier to fall asleep and wake up refreshed. Consistency is key to long-term sleep health.

Prioritize your Sleep

Treat sleep as a non-negotiable part of your health, just like nutrition and exercise. Aim for 7–9 hours each night by setting a consistent bedtime and creating a relaxing nighttime routine. Prioritizing rest boosts energy, mood, and overall well-being.

Make your Bed a Sleep & Intimacy Zone

Reserve your bed for sleep and intimacy only—avoid work, screen time, or other distractions. This strengthens the mental association between your bed and relaxation, making it easier to unwind and fall asleep.

Diet

Eating a large, heavy, or spicy meal too close to bedtime can disrupt sleep by keeping your body busy with digestion. Aim for lighter snacks if needed, and try to finish eating at least two to three hours before bed for better rest.

Exercise regularly

Engaging in 30 minutes of moderate exercise during the day can make it easier to fall asleep at night. Avoid strenuous activity close to bedtime, but regular physical activity boosts serotonin levels and helps you feel more energized and refreshed.

Unplug from Electronics

Avoid screens at least 30 minutes before bed, as the blue light from phones, tablets, and computers can interfere with your body's ability to produce melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep. Instead, try reading a book or practicing relaxation techniques to wind down.

Avoid Stimulants & Limit Alcohol

Avoid caffeine and nicotine in the afternoon and evening, as they can interfere with sleep. While alcohol may make you feel sleepy, it disrupts sleep cycles, leading to poorer rest. Opt for a calming drink like herbal tea instead to promote better sleep.

Create a healthy Sleep Environment

To create a healthy sleep environment, ensure your bedroom is dark, cool, and quiet. Aim for a temperature between 18–21°C and use blackout curtains to block out light. Keep the space tidy and minimalistic to reduce distractions. A quiet, calm atmosphere is ideal, though absolute silence can sometimes be unsettling—gentle background music or sounds may help.

Sleep & the Menstrual Cycle

The menstrual cycle can affect sleep patterns, especially during the luteal phase (the second half of the cycle), when hormonal fluctuations, particularly increased progesterone, may lead to disturbed sleep. Women often experience more difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep during this phase. It's important to schedule enough sleep during this time, as the body may need more rest to cope with these hormonal changes. Prioritizing extra sleep during the luteal phase can help improve sleep quality and overall well-being.

Get Outside

Spending time outdoors during the day, especially in natural light, helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle. Sunlight exposure boosts serotonin levels, improving mood and energy while making it easier to fall asleep at night. Aim for at least 30 minutes of outdoor activity each day to promote better sleep and overall well-being.

Sleep Rituals

A busy or active mind is a common cause of insomnia, making it difficult to fall asleep. To combat this, make time to switch off before bed. Engage in calming activities like deep breathing, meditation, or journaling to quiet your mind and ease into a restful night's sleep.

Write Down your Worries

If your mind is racing with thoughts before bed, try writing them down to release any anxious feelings. This helps clear your mind, making it easier to relax. If you're still unable to fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something calming or boring, like sitting quietly in the dark or reading something uninteresting, like a phone book. Avoid bright light or stimulating activities, as they can signal to your brain that it's time to wake up. Once you feel sleepy, return to bed and try again.