

# How can I get to sleep easily?

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Being unable to fall asleep naturally can be a frustrating experience, with consequences for the next day. One solution is to take medications that help to induce sleep. However, these medications are not a long-term solution to the problem.

This article will discuss 21 methods that people can use to help them fall asleep naturally. It is important to remember that different things will work for different people; so take some time to experiment to find what works.

## 21 ways to fall asleep naturally

There are many ways to improve sleep including:

1. Creating a consistent sleeping pattern



Creating a consistent sleeping pattern can help a person to fall asleep naturally. Going to bed at different times every night is a common habit for many people.

However, an irregular sleeping pattern could interfere with sleep because it interrupts the body's circadian rhythm.

The circadian rhythm refers to a selection of behavioural, physical, and mental changes that follow a 24-hour cycle. A primary function of the circadian rhythm is to determine whether the body is ready for sleep or not.

This is heavily influenced by a biological clock that releases hormones to induce sleep or wakefulness. Going to bed at the same time every night helps the body clock predict when to induce sleep.

## **2. Keeping lights turned off**

The circadian rhythm is also influenced by cues, such as

light, which help the body judge when it is nighttime. Keeping the room as dark as possible when going to bed might help bring on sleep.

### 3. Avoiding napping

Naps during the daytime can also disrupt the circadian rhythm, particularly those longer than 2 hours or close to the evening.

One [study](#) found that students who napped at least three times per week for longer than 2 hours or napped close to the evening had a lower quality of sleep than their peers.

After a poor night's sleep, it is tempting to take a long nap, particularly close to the evening. But try to avoid this as it can adversely affect a healthful sleep cycle.



How can I get enough sleep?

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## 4. Doing exercise

Physical exercise is known to have a positive impact on sleep quality.

One [study](#) that looked at 305 people over 40 years old with sleep problems found that moderate or high-intensity exercise programs led to improvements in sleep quality. The study also found that participants took their sleep medication less frequently.

It is currently unclear whether exercising at different times of day has an impact on sleep.

## 5. Avoiding using your mobile

Currently, there is much debate about whether the use of mobile phones at bedtime affects sleep.

One [study](#) on college students found that those who scored high on a scale of problem phone use, such as addictive texting behavior, had a lower sleep quality.

However, there was no difference in the length of time they slept.

Much of the current research is on students and young people, so it is unclear whether these findings extend to other age groups. Studies also tend to focus on problem phone use. People who do not use their phone in this way may not be as susceptible to sleep disturbances.

More research is needed in this area to understand the extent to which phone use can impact upon sleep.

## 6. Reading books

Reading books can be relaxing and may help prevent anxious thought patterns that could interfere with a person's sleep. It is best to avoid books that might cause strong emotional responses.

## 7. Avoiding caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant. It stimulates wakefulness and can disrupt sleep patterns. It is best to avoid caffeine for at least 4 hours before going to bed. In some people, consuming caffeine at any time of the day could have a negative impact on sleep quality. For these people, it is best to avoid caffeine altogether.

## 8. Trying meditation or mindfulness

Meditation and mindfulness can help reduce [anxiety](#), which often disrupts sleeping.

A [study](#) in older adults with sleeping difficulties found that mindfulness meditation improved sleep quality, compared to people who did not practice mindfulness.

## 9. Trying counting

A longstanding method of inducing sleep is counting down slowly from 100. There are several ideas about why this may work, including boredom or distracting the individual from anxious thoughts.

## 10. Changing eating habits



It is best to allow the body time to digest food before sleep.

What a person eats, particularly in the evening, can have an impact on sleep.

For example, eating a large meal within 1 hour of going to bed may impair a person's ability to sleep. Digesting a meal can take at least 2 to 3 hours.

Lying down during this period can cause discomfort or feelings of nausea and slow the digestive process in some people, though this is not the case for everyone. It is best to allow the body enough time to digest a meal before lying down. The exact time needed will vary from person to person.

## 11. Getting the room temperature right

Being too hot or too cold can have a significant impact on the ability to sleep.

The temperature at which people feel the most

comfortable varies, so it is important to experiment with different temperatures.

However, the National Sleep Foundation recommend temperatures around 65°F as being the ideal condition for sleeping.

## 12. Trying aromatherapy

People have long used aromatherapy to induce feelings of relaxation and sleep.

Lavender oil is a popular choice for helping with sleep. A study on 31 young adults found that using lavender oil before bed had a positive impact on sleep quality. The participants also reported feeling more energy after waking up.

## 13. Finding a comfortable position

A comfortable sleeping position is essential for sleep. Frequently changing positions can be distracting, but finding the right spot can make a big difference to the onset of sleep. Most people find sleeping on their side is the best position for a good night's sleep.

## 14. Listening to music

While this may not work for everyone, some people benefit from listening to relaxing music before going to bed.

A person's response to music will depend on their personal preferences. Sometimes, music may be too stimulating and induce anxiety and sleeplessness.

## 15. Using the bathroom

Needing to use the bathroom can be a significant distraction from sleeping. While leaving the comfort of the bed may seem unappealing at the time, it is

essential to use the bathroom when needed. Trying to hold off going to the bathroom not only prevents sleep but can disrupt sleep later in the night.

## 16. Taking a hot bath or shower

Taking a bath or shower can be relaxing and help prepare the body for sleep. It can also help improve temperature regulation before bed.

## 17. Avoiding reading an e-book



Reading an e-book in bed could affect sleep.

E-books have become increasingly popular in the past few years.

They have backlit screens, which make them ideal for reading before bed in a darkened room. However, this could affect sleep negatively.

One [study](#) gave young adults a printed book and an e-



book to read before bed. The researchers found that when using the e-book, the participants took longer to fall asleep.

They were also more alert during the evenings and less alert in the morning compared to when they read the printed book. Such results suggest that e-books could have a negative impact on sleep.

However, the study only involved 12 participants. The researchers also used a study design that meant participants read both types of book. It is difficult to determine whether being exposed to both reading conditions biased the results.

Few reliable studies exist in this area, and more research is still needed to draw any firm conclusions.

## 18. Taking melatonin

Melatonin is known as the sleep hormone. The body produces it to induce drowsiness and sleep in line with the body clock. People can also take it as a supplement to increase the chances of getting to sleep.

## 19. Using a comfortable bed

In a recent survey by the National Sleep Foundation, **9 out of 10** respondents reported that their mattress was essential to their sleep. Investing in a comfortable mattress could have a positive impact on sleep quality.

## 20. Avoiding noisy environments

Noise can be distracting, prevent the onset of sleep, and lower the quality of a night's sleep.

A 2016 **study** found that participants had a significantly worse sleep in a hospital than at home. The authors of the study found that this was primarily due to the

increased level of noise in the hospital, compared with a person's home.

## 21. Avoiding excessive alcohol consumption

Drinking large amounts of alcohol before bed can have an adverse impact on sleep. Alcohol is problematic because it can induce feelings of restlessness and nausea, which can delay the onset of sleep.

## Takeaway

Getting to sleep naturally is the best way to ensure the mind and body gets the rest that it needs.

Trying the methods above can increase the chances of falling asleep without the need to use any sleep aids.

Hope this helps,

Chris