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SCIENCE-BACKED
SLEEP HACKS

6 Science-Backed Hacks: Sleep Deeper, Rise Happier

Can you go to bed and fall asleep within 5 minutes?

Do you wake up fresh and peppy, or groggy and weary?

Did you know 63 percent of people are unhappy with the amount of sleep they get? By the way, sleep loss can make you fat.

No doubt we need to make time to sleep better and fuller. No matter if we are a night-owl or a morning lark, we cannot have a healthy life without enough sleep. Now you can hack your sleep for happier mornings with these six science-backed sleep hacks.

So, use these sleep hacks to give yourself what you have been depriving yourself of, 8 hours of restful sleep every night.

Sleep Hack #1. Set A Sleep Schedule

- Go to bed at the same time every day, even on weekends. And wake up at the same time every morning. It strengthens your natural sleep-wake cycle, called the circadian rhythm. Regular sleeping times also improve sleep quality.
- For a change, rather than a wake-up alarm, set a gentle tune on your phone to remind yourself you're close to your bedtime. Dim the lights when the sleep-time alarm plays.
- Sleeping earlier is easier than you think. Write your sleeping times on a piece of paper and paste it somewhere prominent: for example, I sleep at 11 pm. I get up at 7 am.

Sleep Hack #2. Take Daily Naps

- Take a nap or a snooze or a siesta or a shuteye in the day. Call it forty-winks or beauty sleep, but giving a brief rest to the brain increases its creativity, intuition, imagination, and ability to solve problems. Sometime back, a 'nap bar' opened in Madrid, called Siesta & Go, where you could walk in and "lie down on a bed as if it were yours."
- Learning lessons after a nap equals learning after a full night of sleep.
- A nap reduces stress and fatigue. A study by Allegheny College of Pennsylvania on 85 healthy college students showed those who took daily naps of 45 to 60 minutes decreased their blood pressure and heart rates and handled anxiety better.
- A NASA study of 747 pilots showed those taking a 26-minute nap every day made 34 percent fewer errors at work and doubled their alertness levels.
- A study found a nap that includes the REM phase increases your receptivity to facial expressions of happiness.
- However, do not try to fill up the lack of proper night-time sleep by daytime napping. Find out the best nap length.

Sleep Hack #3. Avoid Stimulants

- Stop having tea, coffee, chocolate, sodas, nicotine, or cigarette at least 4 hours before bedtime. The stimulant effect of caffeine takes up to six hours to wear off.
- Sleep scientist Patrick M. Fuller, associate professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, follows himself what he advises: to avoid all stimulants past mid-day.
- At all costs, quit the smoking habit altogether. Quit smoking not just for the sake of sleep, but also for your health and your genes.
- Skip the late evening alcohol too. Alcohol initially makes you drowsy, since it is a nervous system depressant. But as soon as the blood alcohol level drops, it activates your sympathetic system. This drop makes you wake up from the deep sleep and dream phases of your sleep. So, you are groggy the next morning.
- Once you've banished all stimulants, if you still find it difficult to fall asleep, try a relaxation program as sleep meditation.

Sleep Hack #4. Exercise Daily

- Exercise enhances the quality of your sleep. Also, not exercising leads to poor sleep. So get into a daily habit of 30 minutes of exercise for five days a week. If you find it hard, read our ultimate guide on how to make exercise a daily habit.
- But remember to schedule your workouts before late evening. Morning and afternoon workouts can increase your quality and quantity of sleep at night.
- Try this for a start: Get up in the morning and go for a 12-minute walk in the park. A 2010 study found that those who exercised in the morning before eating gained almost no weight and burnt more fat throughout the day than other men.
- Don't do any heavy exercise within 4 hours of bedtime. However, some light exercise, like yoga or walking after dinner, is advisable.

Sleep Hack #5. Create Pre-Sleep Rituals

- Creating a new habit is hard. But there's a solution — create rituals. These are specific end-of-the-day habits that prime you for a night of deep, restful sleep.
- Eat a light dinner, around 3 hours before bedtime, to give your digestive system enough time to work. Also, try not to go to bed on a hungry stomach, as it may not let you easily fall asleep.
- Do some light, fun activities after dinner. Push off all heavy work or issues to the next day once you've finished dinner. Read a soothing book (not an ebook).
- Don't touch your laptop, phone, or any other blue light-emitting screen at least 2 hours before bedtime. Blue lights from digital screens depress the secretion of melatonin, a hormone that helps you fall and stay asleep.
- Take a warm shower 1 hour before you hit the bed. Try dimming the lights in your bedroom an hour before bedtime. Low light stimulates your melatonin secretion.
- Try to switch off all digital devices 30 minutes before bedtime.

Sleep Hack #6. Build Bedroom Habits

- Keep your bedroom clutter-free. Do not let your pets into your bedroom; they disturb your sleep.
- Banish laptops and smartphones to a separate room. For best results, never install a TV in your bedroom.
- Do not eat or drink in bed. A 2012 US poll found the mattress, pillows, and even fresh scent of sheets all contribute to the quality of sleep.
- Make sure the bed-sheets and pillow-covers are clean. Change your sheets weekly. Experts suggest you should replace your mattresses every eight years, by when you have used around 20,761 hours lying on top of it.
- Close to sleeping time, cut down the bright lights. Shut out all harsh noise; use earplugs or white noise if you need to.
- Adjust the room temperature to a comfortable level.
- If you're lying awake in your bed for 20 minutes or more, therapists suggest you get out of bed and do something non-stimulating (as reading a boring textbook) until you start to feel drowsy. Whenever that happens, return to bed immediately.

Final Words

If you enjoyed this, please share this and tell others about our site ([Happiness India Project](#)). It would build our enthusiasm and confidence to write more of such articles.

Have a great day and a great year!