

How You Can Get a Better Night's Sleep

Despite common belief, aging doesn't cause sleep problems, and seniors don't need less sleep as they grow older.

Most older people sleep poorly, or not long enough, because of ailments associated with aging, such as arthritis, physical disabilities, respiratory problems and depression.



Lack of exercise, heart disease, anxiety, stress and menopause also can disrupt sleep, and many medications seniors take can cause insomnia.

Changing patterns

"Many people believe that sleeping poorly is just part of growing old. In fact, seniors who fall asleep during the day do so because they aren't getting enough quality sleep at night," says Sonia Ancoli-Israel, M.D., director of the Sleep Disorders Clinic at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Medical Center in California.

Sleep remedies

Sleep and aging experts agree that one's daytime activities and sleep environment are critical to getting a good night's sleep.

Try the following remedies if you have trouble sleeping.

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications could be disturbing your sleep.
- Stay active. Maintain a moderate level of daily activity and do gentle exercise.
- Spend some time outdoors during daylight hours. Sunlight can help set your biological clock.
- Pay attention to what you eat and drink in the evening. Consuming foods and drinks that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea or cola can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages in the evening. They can make you fall asleep faster, but they cause early morning awakenings and fitful sleep.
- Don't smoke. Smokers are more likely to have trouble sleeping than nonsmokers.
- Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and cool.
- Replace your mattress if it's lumpy, sagging or worn out. A comfortable mattress that offers good support can help you fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Ask a doctor for help if your partner snores or has an illness that disturbs your sleep.

Did You Know?



You have access to hundreds of personal and professional growth tools to help you make this your best year yet! Check out the videos, articles, and expert-lead talks available to help you. [Log-in to explore these resources...](#)