

# Sleep Hygiene for Adolescents

Sleep hygiene is a variety of different practices that are necessary to have normal, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness. The most important sleep hygiene measure is to maintain a regular sleep and wake pattern seven days a week. It is also important to spend an appropriate amount of time in bed, not too little, or too excessive. Adolescents should spend a minimum of 8 hours in bed, and a maximum of 10 hours in bed. In addition, good sleep hygiene practices include:

- Keep consistent bedtimes and wake times every day of the week. Late nights or sleeping-in on weekends can throw off a sleep schedule for days.
- The bedroom should be cool, quiet, and comfortable. Have the clock turned away.
- Restrict use of any “screens” (phone, tablet, video console, television, computer, etc.) at least one hour before bed. These can all function as sleep prevention devices.
- Bedtime should follow a predictable and non-stressful sequence of events, such as picking out tomorrow’s outfit, brushing teeth, and then reading relaxing non-screen material or listening to relaxing music.
- Avoid high stimulation activities at least one-hour before bed, such as watching television, playing videogames, texting with friends, or exercise. Avoid the same during any nighttime awakenings.
- If not asleep by 30-45 minutes, it is better to get out of bed to do a low stimulation activity, (i.e., non-screen reading) before returning to bed when feeling tired. This keeps the bed from becoming associated with sleeplessness.
- Avoid going to bed hungry or overly full.
- Physical exercise as a part of the day often helps with sleep time many hours later. Getting outside every day, particularly in the morning, may also be helpful.
- Relaxation techniques such as performing deep, slow abdominal breaths or imagining positive scenes like being on a beach can help encourage relaxation.
- Avoid caffeine (soda, chocolate, tea, coffee, energy drinks) in the afternoons / evenings. Your sleep can be impacted by any caffeine at all at any time of day. Even if caffeine doesn’t prevent falling asleep it can still lead to shallow sleep or frequent awakenings.
- Melatonin is a hormone naturally produced by the brain that plays a role in sleep. Taking 3mg to 6mg, 30-60 minutes before desired bedtime may help with a disrupted sleep pattern.