



CREATING A HEALTHY SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Quality sleep plays an important role in all aspects of our health and wellbeing. Sleep helps repair and restore our bodies and minds after long days. Our mental, physical and emotional wellbeing are all impacted by the quality and quantity of sleep we get each night. That's why our sleeping environment should be one that fosters just that – a good night's rest. There are many variables to consider when creating a healthy sleep environment. Acknowledging the five senses is a good way to ensure you're addressing all of the environmental elements that may impact your sleep quality.

SLEEP QUALITY: THE FIVE SENSES

Touch

- **Adjust the temperature.** The ideal temperature for a restful night of sleep is in the range of 65°F to 75°F; not too hot or too cold.
- **Make your bed.** A clean and neat bed can sometimes make it easier to sleep as it may be more comfortable.
- **Make your bedroom a stress-free zone.** No work, homework, eating or electronic use should happen in bed.

Sight

- **Make sure your room is dark.** Blackout shades can be helpful as well as digital alarm clocks that can be dimmed. Darkness encourages your brain to produce the hormone melatonin, which plays a big role in maintaining your healthy sleep-wake cycle.
- **PUT YOUR PHONE AWAY!** Experts recommend staying off your phone, tablet or computer at least an hour or two (maybe even three) before bed. The blue light from electronics (similar to daylight) sends stimulating signals to your



brain, which can keep you awake and throw off your internal clock. If you feel like you need to use a certain device before bed, it is recommended to use the smallest device possible (like your phone instead of a tablet or laptop) because a smaller screen gives off less blue light.

- **Make your room a sanctuary.** Your room should be visually pleasing to you and a place where you feel you can relax. It might also help to routinely tidy your room as clutter can sometimes subconsciously stress us out, delaying sleep.

Smell

- **Try aromatherapy.** Lavender has been shown to help lower one's blood pressure and heart rate before bed. Other essential oils used in a diffuser, such as peppermint oil or jasmine, have also been shown to help with sleep.
- **Change your sheets once a week.** Sleeping on clean sheets with a fresh scent can make for a more comfortable night's sleep.

Sounds

- **Noise should be kept to a minimum.** White noise from a sound machine or fan may help drown out unavoidable external noise.

Taste

- **Watch what you eat and drink before bedtime.** Avoid caffeine at least six hours before bedtime and try to limit or avoid alcohol before bed. Lighter meals for dinner can help you sleep better, too. Try having protein-filled breakfasts and lunches so you have more energy during the day.



Bed Made

- A clean and neat bed may make sleeping more comfortable.

Window Shades or Curtains Closed

- Blackout curtains can improve sleep quality.

Alarm Clock Dim and Preferably Across the Room

- A bright light can be a distraction, and an alarm clock across the room helps reduce hitting the snooze button over and over, which can lead to unhealthy patterns.

Phone Off and Across the Room

- If the phone is not in arm's reach, you are less likely to use it. Keep your phone away at nighttime because the light and notifications send stimulating signals to the brain.

Sound Machine or Fan

- White noise can help block competing noise from outside the room.

Thermostat Set at 65°F/18°C

- Set your thermostat anywhere from 65°F to 75°F / 23°C; this is a comfortable sleeping temperature.