UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

10 TIPS
FOR HEALTHY SLEEP

1



Get up at the same time every day… and get up early. Doing this every day, even on weekends, sets your biological clock. It's the most important change you can make to improve your sleep.

2



Use your bed only for sleep and intimacy. Avoid activities like eating, watching television, working, or scrolling on your phone or tablet in your bed. This helps to strengthen the mental connection between your bed and sleep.

3



Exercise – but not right before bed. Vigorous activity too close to bedtime can be stimulating. In the evening, switch to light movement, such as stretching, yoga or walking.

4



Nap earlier in the day. Napping late in the day can disrupt your nighttime sleep. If you take a nap, do so before 2 p.m. and for less than 30 minutes to prevent disrupting your nighttime sleep.

5



Only go to bed when you are sleepy. Tune in to your sleepiness cues to let you know when to go to bed. This will increase the likelihood that you will fall asleep within 20 minutes.

6



Create a bedtime "buffer zone." Create a routine that lets you get everything done an hour before bed. Keep the lighting dim, reduce screentime, and use this time for calming activities before sleep.

7



When you can't sleep, reset. If you find your mind racing while trying to fall asleep, and you are still awake after about 20 minutes, get out of bed and engage in a calming activity. Wait until you feel sleepy again before returning to bed.

8



Create a sleep-friendly environment. Keep your bedroom cool, dark, quiet and comfortable. Limit distractions at night, such as clock watching, which can increase stress.

9



Limit substances before bed. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that can make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. Alcohol may make you feel sleepy at first, but it often leads to lighter, more disrupted sleep.

10



Talk to your doctor about snoring. Snoring can be a sign of obstructive sleep apnea. If you are diagnosed with sleep apnea, use your CPAP device consistently. Untreated obstructive sleep apnea damages your brain and heart.

OTTAWAHEART.CA/10-TIPS-HEALTHY-SLEEP