



Dr. Reeta's Sleep Hygiene

Sleep can sometimes be elusive for all of us, especially if there is more than the usual stress in our lives. One step toward having more restful sleep is to look at bedtime as something we prepare ourselves for, using a series of rituals.

Prepare your atmosphere:

1. Refrain from drinking anything caffeinated after 4pm. Also, alcohol may relax you before bed, enough to fall asleep—but it will not help maintain peaceful sleep.
2. An hour or so before bed, use warm-tone task lights in your home, instead of the harsher overhead lights, as the brighter daylight shades are more stimulating, and the warmer quality of task light is relaxing.
3. As you prepare for bed, turn off your electronics such as the television, your laptop, or cellphone. You will be less tempted to stay awake if you create quiet around you.
4. You may want to use a journal to write down thoughts or ideas that occupy your mind during the day. When you close the journal, imagine that its contents are kept safely over night—and will be there for you to pick up again in the morning. (You can also do this by touching your hand to any object like a vase or your nightstand and “let go” of your thoughts for the night. I call this “Touch-and-Let-Go”).
5. I use another trick called “scheduled worry”, and it is just as simple as it sounds. Schedule a time in your day, or just before bed, where you simply allow a space for your worrying thoughts. Set a timer on your phone for 1 to 3 minutes and really give your worries a voice!
6. Preparing for sleep can become a pleasing ritual that you look forward to!

