



## *Dr. Reeta's Sleep Hygiene*

Sleep can sometimes be elusive. One step toward achieving more restful sleep is to consider bedtime something we prepare ourselves for by using a series of rituals.

### Prepare your atmosphere:

1. Refrain from caffeine after 2pm. Avoid alcohol 4 hours before bed. Alcohol may relax us enough to fall asleep—but it will hinder peaceful sleep.
2. An hour or so before bed, use relaxing, warm-tone lighting in your home, as the brighter daylight shades are more stimulating.
- 3. Turn off your electronics (television, tablet, laptop or cellphone) a full hour before bedtime.**
4. Using brief meditation techniques (Minute Meditation to be posted next week) and deep breathing for 1-2 minutes helps calm body and mind. Apps such as Calm, Headspace, etc., can also help with this. My favorite is called Nothing Much Happens, a great brain-training podcast for sleep.
5. I use another method called "scheduled worry", which is just as simple as it sounds. Schedule a time (15-30 minutes) in your day (not before bed) where you simply allow a space for your worrying thoughts.
6. Write down thoughts or ideas that occupy your mind during the day and know they can be picked up again in the morning. (You may also ritually touch 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").

Preparing for sleep is a pleasing ritual to look forward to! Giving the brain time to power down improves sleep quality and brain health.

