

## Improving Sleep

Focus on the quality of your sleep, not only the quantity.

- Sleep needs vary per person.** Each person will need different amounts of sleep based on genetics, age, etc.
- Short uninterrupted sleep is better than long scattered sleep.** More people feel better after 6 hours of uninterrupted sleep than 8 hours of tossing and turning.
- Worrying about sleep makes it worse.** Worry and anxiety make your body stay awake even if you are tired.
- Your body is built to survive and function on low sleep.** Your body evolved to handle poor sleep and function the next day. Even if you are tired, grouchy, or have a hard time concentrating, you can still get things done.
- Your body depends on sleep drive to sleep.** Being awake makes your sleep drive stronger and makes you hungrier for sleep at night. Less sleep across a few nights makes it easier to sleep after that point because your sleep drive gets bigger.

## 10 Tips for Consistent Sleep

1. Create a **set wake up time** and get out of bed within 5-10 minutes of waking up every day of the week
2. Set a bed time based on **number of hours needed** to sleep and wake up time, not the earliest time possible.
3. **Sleep only when sleepy**, when you have to struggle to keep your eyes open.
4. **Cool down and relax** an hour before bed. Don't do anything you need to do/need to get done. Only things that are enjoyable, relaxing, and not too stimulating. If you need help relaxing, practice mindful breathing or progressive muscle relaxation for 10 minutes.
5. **Don't eat food** (heavy meal or snacks), **drink** (coffee, soda, caffeinated beverages or alcohol) or **engage in vigorous activities** (moderate to heavy exercise) immediately before bed or later in the night. Effects of coffee can last about 8 hours in your system.
6. **Try not to worry** about it when you have trouble sleeping. A few bad nights doesn't have a big an impact on the next day as you may have been led to believe.
7. **Don't try to force sleep.** Get out of bed and do something non-stimulating until you are sleepy
8. **Turn the clock away** from your sight to you are not checking it.
9. **Use your bed only for sleep and intimacy.** Do not watch TV, scroll tablets or phone, or use other electronic screens in bed. Disconnect from screens 30-60 minutes before your desired sleep time.
10. **Eliminate napping** as it reduces ability to sleep at night. If you must nap to function safely at your job, keep naps to 15-30 minutes but not within 3 hours of bedtime.