

## How is Your Sleep Affecting Your Mood?

Studies show that poor sleep adversely affects daytime mood and performance. Persistent insomnia is associated with a higher risk of developing clinical anxiety or depression.

### *Tips to Help Improve Your Sleep*

#### **#1 Avoid Caffeine, Alcohol, Nicotine, and Other Chemicals that Interfere with Sleep**

Avoid caffeine (found in coffee, tea, chocolate, cola, and some pain relievers) for four to six hours before bedtime. Similarly, smokers should refrain from using tobacco products too close to bedtime.

#### **#2 Turn Your Bedroom into a Sleep-Inducing Environment**

To achieve such an environment, lower the volume of outside noise with earplugs or a "white noise" appliance. Use heavy curtains, blackout shades, or an eye mask to block light, a powerful cue that tells the brain that it's time to wake up.

#### **#3 Establish a Soothing Pre-Sleep Routine**

Ease the transition from wake time to sleep time with a period of relaxing activities an hour or so before bed.

#### **#4 Go to Sleep When You're Truly Tired**

If you're not asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed, go to another room, and do something relaxing, like reading or listening to music until you are tired enough to sleep.

#### **#5 Use Light to Your Advantage**

Natural light keeps your internal clock on a healthy sleep-wake cycle.

#### **#6 Keep Your Internal Clock Set with a Consistent Sleep Schedule**

Waking up at the same time each day is the very best way to set your clock, and even if you did not sleep well the night before, the extra sleep drive will help you consolidate sleep the following night.

#### **#7 Nap Early—Or Not at All**

If you must nap, it's better to keep it short and before 5 p.m.

#### **#8 Lighten Up on Evening Meals**

Finish dinner several hours before bedtime and avoid foods that cause indigestion.

#### **#9 Exercise Early**

Exercise helps promote sleep if it is done several hours before sleep.

#### **#10 Follow Through**

If your sleep difficulties don't improve through good sleep hygiene, you may want to consult your physician or a sleep specialist.

Studies from the Sleep Disorders Center at Stanford University School of Medicine.  
Excerpted from the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School.