

21 Strategies to Help You Fall Asleep Faster

(Mercola.com)

1. Create a consistent sleeping pattern by going to bed and getting up at the same time throughout the week, including on weekends.
2. Make sure your bedroom is as dark as possible. If you don't have blackout shades, use an eye mask.
3. Avoid taking naps during the day or too close to bedtime.
4. Exercise regularly.
5. Minimize cellphone use and use of other blue light-emitting devices.
6. Read a book to relax before bed.
7. Avoid caffeine and other stimulants at least four hours before bed.
8. Meditate or practice mindfulness daily.
9. "Count sheep" by slowly counting downward from 100 to zero.
10. Avoid eating at least three hours before bedtime.
11. Lower the temperature in your bedroom; an ideal temperature for sleeping is around 65 degrees F.
12. Use aromatherapy; lavender is relaxing and may help induce sleep.
13. Find your most comfortable sleeping position. While the article suggests side sleeping, I would suggest you try sleeping in a neutral position — on your back with a pillow supporting your neck, not your head. For more information, see Dr. Peter Martone's article on "The Best Position for Sleep".
14. Listen to relaxing music before bed.
15. Don't wait to use the bathroom; while it may seem distracting to get out of bed to pee, trying to hold it will simply disrupt your sleep later.
16. Take a hot shower or bath before bed.
17. Avoid e-books, as the blue light from the screen will impede melatonin release.
18. Try a melatonin supplement. Another, perhaps even more effective alternative is 5-HTP, which is a precursor to both serotonin and melatonin. I believe this is a superior approach to using melatonin. In one study, an amino acid preparation containing both GABA (a calming neurotransmitter) and 5-HTP reduced time to fall asleep, increased the duration of sleep and improved sleep quality.
19. Invest in a comfortable mattress. To this, I would add the suggestion to look for a chemical-free mattress to avoid exposure to flame retardant chemicals.
20. Minimize noise; use ear plugs if environmental noise is unavoidable.
21. Avoid alcohol.