

Sleep Hygiene Tips (Sleep Enhancing Behaviours)

(Repurposed with permission from *Empowering You to CHANGEpain* workbook)

Sleep Hygiene practices are things we do to increase the likelihood that we will sleep well.

Begin by setting stable sleep and wake times, and stick to them as closely as possible.

To control light and foster melatonin production:

- Avoid screen time for at least 1 hour before bed
- Strive for total darkness in your room
- Consider using bright lights (possibly light therapy lamps) in the early morning and late afternoon to lengthen your “day” and signal your wakefulness/arousal system

To control cortisol:

- Avoid caffeine entirely, or no more than 5 hours after waking.. (includes chocolate and lower caffeine teas like white or green)
- Avoid alcohol entirely or at least 3 hours before bed
- Avoid eating large meals 3 hours before bed (but don't try to go to bed if you are very hungry)
- Consider using relaxation strategies throughout the day, but especially in the hour before bed
- Consider more “vigorous” exercise in the morning (such as a walk, cycle, swim) and a very gentle restorative movement routine (stretching, gentle yoga) in the evening to facilitate relaxation
- Avoid activities that increase your arousal before bed. This may even include reading a stimulating book, paying bills, planning your next day

To control temperature and other extraneous variables:

- Consider a cool shower before bed
- Monitor the temperature in your house and perhaps open a window at night, turn the thermostat down, or decrease the blankets in your bed
- Consider earplugs for noise control
- Consider white noise like a fan
- If you wake up frequently to go to the bathroom, monitor when you drink beverages and consider stopping/limiting drinking 2-3 hours before bed
- Use props to increase comfort

Create a pre-sleep routine based on things that make you feel relaxed and avoiding things that make you feel stimulated. Examples of possible pre-sleep activities:

- Bath/shower
- Reading on the couch
- Relaxation/meditation
- Gentle stretching
- Having a cup of herbal tea