

## Establishing a Bed-Time Preparation Routine!

Here are some ways to begin a great bed-time preparation routine:

- Begin by “slowing down” your activity
  - Turn off the computer
  - Dim the lights an hour or more before going to bed
  - Take a warm bath
  - Listen to calming music or soothing sounds
  - Do some restorative yoga or relaxation exercises
- Remove any distractions (mentally and physically) that will prevent you from sleeping.
- Getting your mind and body ready for sleep is essential.



## Information Provided by:

<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/getting/overcoming/tips>

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/ask-the-expert/sleep-hygiene>

<http://familymedicine.tufts.edu/pdf/Sleep-Hygiene.pdf>

[http://www.sleepoz.org.au/files/facts\\_sheets](http://www.sleepoz.org.au/files/facts_sheets)

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## Improving Your Sleeping Habits

St. Thomas Aquinas College



Office of Counseling  
&  
Psychological Services



## Sleep Hygiene

### What does this mean?

According to the National sleep foundation, “sleep hygiene” is “a variety of different practices that are necessary to have normal, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime awareness.” (2011)

The most common cause of insomnia is a change in your daily routine such as traveling, change in work hours, or other disruptions such as eating, exercise, and leisure.

Relationship conflicts can also cause sleep problems as well.

Learning and paying attention to good sleeping habits and sleep hygiene is the most important thing to do when you want to maintain a good night’s rest.

## Tips for Good Sleep Habits

### The Do’s and Don’t of Sleep

#### The Do’s of a Good Night’s Rest:

##### Do:

- Go to bed at the same time each day. (The body has a natural clock which will make you sleepy when you are ready for bed.)
- Get up from bed at the same time each day. (This helps to keep your body clock synchronized with what is going on outside.)
- Get regular exercise each day, preferably in the morning.
- Get regular exposure to outdoor or bright lights, especially in the late afternoon.
- Keep the temperature in your bedroom comfortable
- Keep the bedroom quiet when sleeping.
- Keep the bedroom dark enough to facilitate sleep.
- Use your bed only for sleep.
- Take medications as directed.
- Use a relaxation exercise just before going to sleep.
- Keep your hands and feet warm.

#### The Don’t’s of a Good Night’s Rest:

##### Don’t:

- Exercise just before going to bed
- Engage in stimulating activity just before bed, such as playing a competitive game, watching an exciting program on television, or movie.
- Have caffeine in the evening.
- Read or watch television in bed.
- Use alcohol to help you sleep.
- Smoke
- Look at the clock all the time.
- Go to bed too hungry or too full.
- Take another person’s sleeping pills.
- Take over-the-counter sleeping pills without your doctor’s knowledge.
- Take daytime naps.
- Command yourself to go to sleep.

## Sleep Schedule Checklist

- Place a checkmark next to each strategy that you are willing to consistently implement to establish a more productive sleep schedule:

#### During waking hours:

- \_\_\_ Engage in daily vigorous exercise during the afternoon for 20 to 30 minutes.
- \_\_\_ Avoid alcohol 4 to 5 hours prior to bed.
- \_\_\_ Avoid spicy foods at night.
- \_\_\_ Avoid naps during the day, especially after 4 pm. If you do nap, do so for no longer than 20-30 mins.
- \_\_\_ Avoid coffee, tea, colas, chocolate, and other foods or drinks containing caffeine, especially after 3 pm.

#### Sleep Induction Procedures:

- \_\_\_ Maintain a consistent sleep schedule.
- \_\_\_ Establish a routine and follow it consistently. Get to bed and get out of bed at the same time every day.
- \_\_\_ Take a warm bath/shower 30 minutes prior to bed.
- \_\_\_ Avoid conflict issues prior to bed.
- \_\_\_ Write down disturbing thoughts to get them off your mind.
- \_\_\_ Establish a bed-time preparation routine.\*

#### Going to Bed:

- \_\_\_ Lie down to sleep only when tired.
- \_\_\_ Imagine relaxing scenes while in bed rather than thinking about the next day.
- \_\_\_ When you go to sleep, keep the room as dark as possible.
- \_\_\_ Play soothing, quiet music or white noise.
- \_\_\_ Do not use the bed for activities like TV, reading, and listening to music.
- \_\_\_ If you can’t fall asleep within 30-45 minutes, get up and out of bed and leave your room. Try to read, do yoga, or another calming activity.

Adapted from Lipman, 2009