

Sleep Better with Proper Sleep Hygiene. What does that mean?

The Hygiene of Sleep was a concept developed in 1939 by Nathaniel Kleitman, PhD, he was The pioneer in sleep research and devoted his entire life to the study of sleep. His book, *Sleep and Wakefulness*, is regarded as the ultimate source book for all sleep researchers.⁶ Since 1939 others have built upon his work and borrowed from it. The term Sleep Hygiene as it is used today, describes a method of sleep self-help. Just as one must care for one's teeth through proper dental hygiene, a regimen of brushing and flossing. **One can also help assure good sleep by implementing the following practices:**

Avoid caffeine after Noon.

Sleep in a dark, cool, quiet room. Add black-out curtains if necessary.

Cover electronics that have lights that glow green, blue, or yellow at night. (Red is OK)

Put away the cell phone and the lap top.

Make a habit of going to sleep at the same time each night, before midnight.

Humans are diurnal creatures, keep a consistent daytime schedule.

Do not use the bed for watching television, reading, computer work, or anything other than sex and sleep.

Associate the bed with sleep, if you are restless and are not sleeping, get out of bed.

Sleep on the best quality mattress you can afford, you spend approximately 2,555 hours in bed per year.

Avoid strenuous exercise three hours prior to sleep.

Avoid alcohol in the evening, as it is a depressant at first and then a few hours later causes sleep disturbances.

Avoid watching fear-based, amygdala stimulating, news programs or movies before bed.

Take a very warm shower or bath with lavender oil before bed, as the body cools, the natural tendency toward sleep is triggered.

Sprinkle lavender essential oil on your pillow. European research has shown the scent of lavender to be a good sleep aid.

Avoid eating a heavy meal after six in the evening, but do not go to bed hungry.

A few ounces of turkey, a few raw almonds, or a hard-boiled egg can also be helpful.

Drinking warm milk with a small amount nutmeg sprinkled in it can also support sleep.

Avoid drinking large amounts of water before sleep.

Develop a self-quieting practice such as prayer or meditation one hour before bed.