



5 BAD SLEEPING HABITS TO BREAK IMMEDIATELY

Are You Ruining Your Chances of Good

Sleep Before You Even Lie Down?

Trouble falling asleep? You might have one of these five common bad bedtime behaviours. Learn how to kick the habit and get back to sleep with these tips.

You're tired of being tired. We get it. Plenty of people notice the effects of poor sleep – everything from inability to concentrate to irritability to weight gain – yet they don't know where to begin to reverse the cycle of poor sleep. Take a look at your bedtime routine: You may be ruining your chances for sleeping soundly before your head even hits the pillow.

Bad Bedtime Habit #1:

Bingeing before Bed

No, we're not talking about watching your favourite show nonstop (we'll get to that in no. 5), we're talking about dinner ... and dessert ... and night time snacks. Your body needs time to digest all that food before you lie down, otherwise you're likely to have indigestion and heartburn, which can interfere with sleep. Why? When your stomach is really full, acid can creep into your oesophagus (hello, heartburn). Lying down compounds the problem since gravity isn't there to aid in keeping the stomach acid in place.

Break the habit:

Try to eat dinner 2 to 3 hours before you go to bed.

Bad Bedtime Habit #2:

Overdoing the Nightcaps

Sorry. It's just not true that consuming alcohol before bed helps you sleep better. While alcohol may make you feel drowsy, numerous studies point out that it disrupts your ability to go into and remain in a deep, restful sleep state.

Break the habit:

Try limiting your alcohol consumption to the early evening (or not at all). Beyond this time, your body won't be able to digest it before you hit the sack and you'll be disrupting your ability to snooze. (Nix coffee or other caffeinated drinks in the evening too, because they stimulate your body and keep you up.)

Bad Bedtime Habit #3:

Working up a Sweat before Bed.

Rigorous exercise, like taking a long run before you snooze, can make it difficult to sleep. Intense exercise raises your body temperature and triggers the release of endorphins, plus it can raise levels of cortisol. Any other time of day, no problem. In fact, people who exercise regularly report sleeping better. But your core body temperature needs to go down for you to sleep well. And all those endorphins bouncing around in your brain may keep you buzzing, making it harder to unwind and fall asleep.

Break the habit:

Hey, exercising is good for you so keep it up. Just save the heavy-duty workouts for at least 1 to 2 hours before bedtime. You might also consider exercises you can weave into your bedtime routine that will help you unwind, like yoga or easy stretching.

Bad Bedtime Habit

#4: Giving in to Your Inner Night Owl

It's tempting to stay up an hour or two thinking you can get more done that way. But sliding into the habit of going to bed later and later can have disastrous results on your health. Night owls not only sleep less, but may be at a greater risk for developing poor eating habits and diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Break the habit:

Get into a sleep routine. This can be a hard one, especially for diehard night owls, but try to stick to the same bedtime and wake-up time every day (yes, weekends too). Your body will thank you. Ease into this routine by going to bed 15 minutes earlier for a week and rise 15 minutes earlier. Keep up this strategy until you've reached your desired bedtime.

Bad Bedtime Habit

#5: Sleeping with Your Screen

Your smartphone is part of your life. It's your newscaster, travel planner, organizer, entertainer, alarm and more all rolled into one. Yet your brain is wired to react to what it sees on the screen. It acts as a stimulant, as opposed to helping lull you to sleep. That one last check of your email before bed? That sends your brain into problem-solving mode, not sleep mode. And the light from those screens can negatively impact your sleep too, again signalling to your brain it's still time to be awake, as opposed to releasing sleep-inducing hormones.

Break the habit:

Pay attention to your screen time before bed. Try to avoid checking your phone once you're in bed. Instead, try reading a book (an actual book, not one on your phone) before bed. Still having trouble resisting the urge to check your phone? Consider keeping it in another room and using an old-fashioned clock as your alarm instead.

These five tips can easily help you improve your sleep habits, but remember, the foundation for a great sleep routine is a **great mattress**. If your current one is giving you aches and pains when you wake up every morning, you may want to consider purchasing a new one.