



## Southlake Neurology & Neurophysiology Clinic, PLLC

General Neurology  
Sleep Medicine  
Clinical Neurophysiology

Vascular Neurology  
Neurosonology  
Neurodiagnostics

### Good sleep hygiene tips

**Fix a bedtime and an awakening time.** One should go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time. Consistent bedtime and arousal time will keep you synchronized with your biological clock (circadian). Going to bed late or too early or too late will result in sleep phase disorder. A good bedtime is 10:30 p.m. and a good wake-up time is 6:30 a.m.

**Avoid napping during the day.** If you nap throughout the day, it is no wonder that you will not be able to sleep at night. The late afternoon for most people is a "sleepy time." Many people will take a nap at that time. This is generally not a bad thing to do, provided you limit the nap to less than 20 minutes.

**Avoid alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime.** Many people believe that alcohol helps them sleep. While alcohol has an immediate sleep-inducing effect, a few hours it will cause disruption of sleep primarily because of shallow breathing and drop in oxygen levels.

**Avoid caffeine before bedtime.** This includes caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea and many sodas, as well as chocolate. Caffeine is a stimulant and its effects can last for hours.

**Avoid heavy, spicy, or sugary foods 4-6 hours before bedtime.** These can affect your ability to stay asleep. These types of food can also result in gastroesophageal reflux. Silent gastric reflux can result in arousals during the night.

**Exercise regularly, but not right before bed.** Regular exercise, particularly in the afternoon, can help deepen sleep. Strenuous exercise within the 3 hours before bedtime can decrease your ability to fall asleep. The preferred time of exercise is morning time.

**Use comfortable bedding.** Uncomfortable bedding can prevent good sleep.

731 E. Southlake Blvd. Ste 160, Southlake, Texas 76092  
Phone: (817) 421-2905 Fax: (817) 416-7284  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 93299, Southlake, Texas 76092

**Find a comfortable temperature setting for sleeping and keep the room well ventilated.** If your bedroom is too cold or too hot, it can keep you awake. A cool bedroom is often the most conducive to sleep.

**Block out all distracting noise,** and eliminate as much light as possible. You should avoid watching television in bed and, in particular, watching disturbing news. You should also avoid using a lap top in bed. Bedroom is for sleep and sex only.

**Try a light snack before bed.** Warm milk and foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, such as bananas, tuna, or chicken may help induce sleep. Avoid high carbohydrate snacks as they will induce weight gain.

**Practice relaxation techniques before bed.** Relaxation techniques such as yoga, deep breathing and others may help relieve anxiety and reduce muscle tension.

**Don't take your worries to bed.** Leave your worries about job, school, daily life, etc., behind when you go to bed. Commonly people begin to worry about their worldly issues later in the evening or just before bedtime.

**Establish a pre-sleep ritual.** Pre-sleep rituals, such as a warm bath or a few minutes of reading (outside the bedroom), can help you sleep. Warming the body with a hot bath or a shower can also help induce sleep

**Get into your favorite sleeping position.** If you don't fall asleep within 15-30 minutes, get up, go into another room, and read until sleepy. If you find that you get up in the middle of night and cannot get back to sleep *within 15-20 minutes*, then do not remain in the bed "trying hard" to sleep. "Trying hard" will only cause more arousal. Get out of bed. Leave the bedroom. Read, have a light snack, do some quiet activity, or take a bath. You will generally find that you can get back to sleep 20 minutes or so later. Do not perform mentally challenging or engaging activity such as office work, housework, etc. Do not watch television. By restricting your sleep to "in-bed" only, your brain will begin to associate the bed with sleep and not with other activities.

Have a good night sleep!

Sincerely,

Dr Asher Imam

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