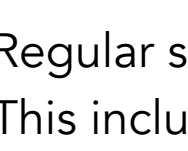


## Are You Maintaining Healthy Sleep Habits This Winter?

The winter months don't just bring shorter days, reduced sun exposure and colder temps; they can make us feel much sleepier and less energetic than usual. Research shows that our bodies can actually [produce more melatonin](#), a chemical that induces sleep and regulates our sleep-wake cycle, or circadian rhythm, in the winter.

So how do you avoid that dreaded winter fatigue and maintain healthy sleep habits? Here are some tips to help you feel well rested, healthy and happy:



### Seek out sunlight during the day.

Regular sun exposure helps regulate many important body processes. This includes balancing serotonin levels to help maintain mood and happiness, in addition to melatonin production which regulates our circadian rhythm. The sun is also an [important source of vitamin D](#), which helps to keep our immune systems in fighting shape, as well as regulate our mood. Committing to regular walks on sunny days and opening your blinds to let in natural light during the day can make a big difference.



### Keep yourself physically active.

In addition to the obvious health benefits of staying active, regular exercise can also help our bodies maintain their circadian rhythm. When we workout, the [brain makes the chemical adenosine](#), which helps us feel relaxed and sleepy at night. However, it's important to note that high-intensity exercise will increase your heart rate and body temperature, which can make it more difficult to fall asleep. So if you have trouble falling asleep, try morning workouts to prime your body for a good night's rest.



### Practice good eating habits.

When considering your overall sleep quality, remember to consider your daily diet. Eating larger meals and comfort foods that are heavy in sugar and carbs can make you feel sleepy, but can also cause poor sleep quality and more nighttime wake ups. Practicing healthy eating habits, and [incorporating mood-boosting foods](#) like salmon, berries and leafy greens, can help improve daytime function and positively impact your overall sleep quality.



### Improve your air quality.

When the temperature is brisk, the air in your home can get extra dry—especially with artificial heat keeping it toasty. This can cause [congestion and irritation in the nose and throat](#), often interfering with sleep. Consider lowering the heat before heading off to bed and using a humidifier in your bedroom at night to help keep the air moist.

## Mindful Moment

Another way to improve sleep at night is to try bedtime meditation. Meditation before bed can help us settle our minds and relax our bodies after a stressful day. Consider turning off the TV and closing your social apps early, and instead opening a guided meditation app like Headspace or Calm that can play from the comfort of your bedside. A quick YouTube search can also bring up an array of free meditation videos to help get a better night's rest.



## Ideas & Insights



As one of the most complex human processes, sleep is often an area of great mystery and also great intrigue. Depending on lifestyle, age and general personality traits, "normal" sleep can look different for everyone. Here are some interesting statistics around [sleep in the U.S.](#):

- 78% of people say they are more excited to go to bed if they have fresh-smelling sheets.
- Across a large population of sleepers, 54.1% of total time in bed was spent sleeping on their side, 37.5% sleeping on their back, and 7.3% sleeping on their stomach.
- Drinking more than two servings of alcohol per day for men and more than one serving per day for women has been found to decrease sleep quality by 39%.
- 75 minutes of high-intensity exercise or 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week has been associated with reduced levels of daytime sleepiness and better concentration even when tired.

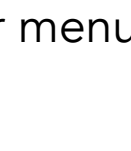
## Reading List

- [Home remedies for the common cold](#) that can provide relief.
- 5 ways to [improve your mental health](#) as you age.
- Understanding [seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\)](#) and how to manage it.
- 10 tips for [combatting dry, itchy skin](#) in the winter.

## Moment of HaPiness



According to a [recent survey](#), many Americans have been cooking more at home (44%), trying new recipes (31%), cooking with loved ones (25%) and experimenting with different ingredients and cuisines (23%) during the pandemic. The experience of creating meals together and sharing the results can have many positive effects on our relationships—from building teamwork to developing skills for your little ones, and even creating new memories. This winter, consider adding a new recipe—or many recipes—to your menu and enjoy with the people who matter most.



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