

# practical tips to sleep better

Simple lifestyle changes can make a world of difference to your quality of sleep. Try following these simple tips.

- Z** Keep regular hours. Going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time, all the time, will programme your body to sleep better.
- Z** Create a restful sleeping environment. Your bedroom should be kept for rest and sleep and it should be neither too hot, nor too cold; and as quiet and dark as possible. For more information visit [www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/perfectsleepenvironment](http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/perfectsleepenvironment)
- Z** Make sure your bed is comfortable. It's difficult to deep, restful sleep on one that's too soft, too hard, too small too old. If you're not sure if you need a new bed, the NBF website lots of advice [www.bedfed.org.uk](http://www.bedfed.org.uk)
- Z** Take more exercise. Regular, moderate exercise such as swimming or walking can help relieve the day's stresses and strains. But not too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake!
- Z** Cut down on stimulants such as caffeine in tea or coffee – especially in the evening. They interfere with falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Have a hot milky drink or herbal tea instead.
- Z** Don't over-indulge. Too much food or alcohol, especially late at night, just before bedtime, can play havoc with sleep patterns. Alcohol may help you fall asleep initially, but will interrupt your sleep later on in the night.
- Z** Don't smoke. Yes, it's bad for sleep, too: smokers take longer to fall asleep, wake more often and often experience more sleep disruption.
- Z** Try to relax before going to bed. Switch off screens an hour before bedtime and instead have a warm bath, listen to some quiet music, do some yoga – all help to relax both the mind and body. Your doctor may be able to recommend a helpful relaxation tape, too.
- Z** Deal with worries or a heavy workload by making lists of things to be tackled the next day.
- Z** If you can't sleep, don't lie there worrying about it. Get up and do something you find relaxing until you feel sleepy again – then go back to bed.

