

## Ten Important Non-Drug Techniques for Improving Your Sleep

1. Don't worry about getting eight hours of sleep. People who live the longest sleep seven hours per night, adults average 7 hours, and most people need between six and eight hours of sleep to function effectively during the day.
2. Since studies consistently show that poor sleepers underestimate how much they sleep they actually get, tell yourself you are getting more sleep than you think.
3. Your time in bed, from lights out at bedtime to the time you get out of bed in the morning, should not be more than your average sleep duration plus one hour. For example, if you sleep 6 hours on average, do not spend more than 7 hours in bed from lights out to arising time. **This is the most important behavioral technique for improving your sleep!**
4. Use the bedroom for sleep and sexual activity only. If you prefer to read or watch television in bed before lights out as a relaxation activity, limit this to 20-30 minutes.
5. Allow an hour wind-down period before bedtime and make sure you feel drowsy when you turn the lights off to go to sleep.
6. If you do not fall asleep within 20-30 minutes, go to another room and engage in a quiet, relaxing activity until you feel drowsy for 30 minutes, then return to your bed. Do the same thing if you wake up during the night and don't fall back to sleep within 20-30 minutes. This is called the half hour-half hour rule.
7. Do not vary your arising times by more than half hour, including weekends, no matter how little or poorly you have slept. This will help your brain develop a consistent sleep rhythm.
8. Practice relaxation techniques at bedtime or if you wake up during the night including muscular relaxation, relaxing imagery, and abdominal breathing techniques.
9. Exercise by taking a brisk walk 3-6 hours before bedtime. This will improve your sleep by causing a greater rise and fall in your body temperature.
10. Keep your room cooler to help your body temperature fall, avoid caffeine after lunch, and avoid exposure to blue light from tablets, phones, and computers at least an hour before bed.