



## *Sleep More- Tips for Improved Sleep Hygiene*

Dr. Jacqueline Fields | May 2015

Sleep is your body's way of resetting itself metabolically and psychologically. You are designed to function optimally on a 24-hour circadian rhythm. Sleep is what helps your body readjust to the stresses placed upon it during the day. If you are not getting the appropriate amount of sleep or keep adjusting your sleeping pattern (day shift to night shift etc.) your natural stress response will not be able to function properly. Try to get 7–8 hours of sleep each night, sleeping as much as possible before midnight.

### **If you have trouble relaxing or falling sleep:**

- ☼ Begin by removing stimuli (TV, smart phone, computer, tablet/ipad etc.) for at least 1 hour before bed
- ☼ Practice relaxation (dim lighting, music, warm tea, hot bath) during the 30–45 minutes before bed
- ☼ Read a relaxing novel, devotional, or book of inspirational stories. Consider a daily practice of writing in a gratitude journal.
- ☼ You may find it helpful to write down the next day's tasks so you can relax your mind knowing all your "worries" will not be forgotten in the morning.
- ☼ Try to go to bed about the same time each night. Even on weekends try not to break this routine, even when it may be tempting to stay up late.
- ☼ Cut the caffeine. This will help you get the deep sleep that is most refreshing. If you take any caffeine, take it before noon. Avoid all stimulants in the evening, including coffee, chocolate, caffeinated sodas/teas as they will delay sleep and increase your chance of waking during the night.
- ☼ Sleep in total darkness- Use room darkening shades, utilize alarm clocks with red number display as it does not disrupt natural melatonin secretion. When traveling, place a rolled up towel in front of the hotel room door to block out hall light and bring black tape to cover up the light on smoke detectors or other sources of bright light.
- ☼ Disconnect from your cell phone in the bedroom - take a breather and turn it off. Email and voicemail were invented so you could be away from the phone not tethered to it! If you have to use it as your alarm- turn it to airplane mode before bed so that texts/calls/emails will not disturb you during your rest.

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