



SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep problems are very common for headache sufferers. In a study of over 1200 migraineurs, over half reported difficulty getting to sleep and over 60% had problems maintaining sleep.

The use of sleep medications are not recommended except on a very occasional basis. Some can be habit forming and make you use more and more to make you sleepy. Good sleep habits and routine have a more positive impact than medication in the long run.

Before turning to a medication, lifestyle changes may be of help. Use the bed for sleep and sex only. The room should be dark and quiet and at a cool temperature when it is time to sleep. Also keep a detailed sleep log that records your sleep habits. It will help you see trends in sleep patterns. You can also try online sites and cell phone apps to help you keep a log.

Here are a few helpful sleep strategies to try:

- Establish a routine of relaxing behaviors 10 to 60 minutes prior to going to bed to try to train your brain that it is time to sleep
 - Try to empty your mind of intense thoughts or feelings before bedtime
 - Keep a journal by your bed to write down thoughts that might be keeping you from sleeping
 - Give yourself a couple hours of quiet, relaxed time as a buffer. Do something relaxing. This will be different for each person, whether it's reading a book, taking a warm bath or having some decaffeinated herbal tea and watching television.
 - Turn off your TV and all video based electronics at least 30 to 40 minutes before trying to sleep
- Sleep as much as you feel you need to feel rested during the next day, but do not oversleep. The average number of hours needed ranges from 6 to 9 hours a night. For some people too much sleep can trigger headaches
 - Avoid staying up late on weekends and sleeping in, and then trying to go to bed at your regular time on Sunday night.
 - Set the alarm and arise daily at the same time. Don't get into the habit of hitting the snooze button
 - Go to bed only when you are sleepy and intending to go to sleep. If you can't fall asleep within 20 mins (or 2 position changes), leave the room and don't return until you again feel sleepy
- Don't eat a heavy meal or drink large quantities of liquid prior to going to sleep but don't go to sleep hungry either

- Try a high protein food or a piece of fruit a couple of hours prior to sleep. They can increase L-tryptophan which helps produce melatonin and serotonin which can help you get to sleep and sleep more deeply
 - Caffeine can live in your body for up to 24 hours for some people. Try to have your last caffeinated beverage no later than 8 hours before trying to sleep.
 - Limit alcohol. For some people it may help to fall asleep, but the sleep is usually fragmented and not restful
- Exercise regularly but not within 4 hours of bedtime
 - Eliminate Nicotine

If you live where there is a lot of traffic or ambient noise, consider using a white noise generator, fan or air filter. In one survey by Consumer Reports magazine of people who report problems with sleep, 70% said that sound machines helped them to get to and to stay asleep. If you simply cannot fall asleep, get up and try to restart by doing something to distract yourself before going back to bed. Avoid anything that's goal-directed or too physically or mentally activating such as house chores, paying bills or working on a computer.