



**WORKING FOR A HEALTHIER TN**



# Sound Sleep Challenge

## *Sleep Checklist*

**DIRECTIONS:** Use this Checklist every day to increase your chances of getting a good night's (or day's) rest! Simply ✓ each healthy sleep habit you practiced. (Please see the 'Sleep Checklist Guidelines' to learn more about each of these healthy sleep habits.)

Healthy Sleep Habit	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
Expose yourself to bright sunlight in the morning.														
Exercise during the day.														
Be smart about what you eat and drink.														
Fight after-dinner drowsiness.														
Avoid bright screens within 1-2 hours of bedtime.														
Wind down and clear your head.														
Improve your sleep environment.														
How well-rested do you feel on a scale of 1-10?														

At the end of the challenge, tell us about how your Sound Sleep Challenge went [HERE](#).

# Sound Sleep Challenge

## *Sleep Checklist Guidelines*

**Expose yourself to bright sunlight in the morning.** The closer to the time you get up, the better. Have your coffee outside, for example, or eat breakfast by a sunny window. The light on your face will help you wake up.

**Exercise during the day.** People who exercise regularly sleep better at night and feel less sleepy during the day. Regular exercise also improves the symptoms of insomnia and sleep apnea and increases the amount of time you spend in the deep, restorative stages of sleep. Even light exercise—such as walking for just 10 minutes a day—improves sleep quality!

### **Be smart about what you eat and drink.**

- Limit caffeine and nicotine. You might be surprised to know that caffeine can cause sleep problems up to 10-12 hours after drinking it! Similarly, smoking is another stimulant that can disrupt your sleep, especially if you smoke close to bedtime.
- Avoid big meals at night. Try to schedule dinnertime earlier in the evening, and avoid heavy, rich foods within two hours of bed. Spicy or acidic foods can cause stomach trouble and heartburn.
- Avoid alcohol before bed. While a nightcap may help you relax, it interferes with your sleep cycle once you're asleep.
- Avoid drinking too many liquids in the evening. Drinking lots of fluids may result in frequent bathroom trips throughout the night.
- Cut back on sugary foods and refined carbs. Eating lots of sugar and refined carbs (such as white bread, white rice and pasta) during the day can trigger wakefulness at night and pull you out of the deep, restorative stages of sleep.

**Fight after-dinner drowsiness.** If you get sleepy way before your bedtime, get off the couch and do something mildly stimulating, such as washing the dishes, calling a friend or getting clothes ready for the next day. If you give in to the drowsiness, you may wake up later in the night and have trouble getting back to sleep.

**Avoid bright screens within 1-2 hours of your bedtime.** The blue light emitted by your phone, tablet, computer or TV is especially disruptive. You can minimize the impact by using devices with smaller screens or turning the brightness down.

**Wind down and clear your head.** Stress, worry and anger from your day can make it very difficult to sleep well. Taking steps to manage your overall stress levels and learning how to curb the worry habit can make it easier to unwind at night.

- Try developing a relaxing bedtime ritual to help prepare your mind for sleep, such as practicing a relaxation technique (like a deep breathing exercise or a body scan exercise), taking a warm bath, or dimming the lights and listening to soft music or an audiobook.

- Set aside specific times during the day for checking your phone and social media and, as much as possible, try to focus on one task at a time. You'll be better able to calm your mind at bedtime since problems clearing your head at night can also stem from your daytime habits. The more overstimulated your brain becomes during the day, the harder it can be to slow down and unwind at night. Maybe, like many of us, you're constantly interrupting tasks during the day to check your phone, email or social media. Then when it comes to getting to sleep at night, your brain is so accustomed to seeking fresh stimulation, it becomes difficult to unwind.

**Improve your sleep environment.** A peaceful bedtime routine sends a powerful signal to your brain that it's time to wind down and let go of the day's stresses. Sometimes even small changes to your environment can make a big difference to your quality of sleep.

- Keep your room dark, cool and quiet.
- Keep noise down. If you can't avoid or eliminate noise from neighbors, traffic or other people in your household, try masking it with a fan or sound machine. Earplugs may also help.
- Keep your room cool. Most people sleep best in a slightly cool room (around 65° F or 18° C) with adequate ventilation. A bedroom that is too hot or too cold can interfere with quality sleep.
- Make sure your bed is comfortable. Your bed covers should leave you enough room to stretch and turn comfortably without becoming tangled. If you often wake up with a sore back or an aching neck, you may need to experiment with different levels of mattress firmness, foam toppers and pillows that provide more or less support.
- Reserve your bed for sleeping. By not working, watching TV, or using your phone, tablet, or computer in bed, your brain will associate the bedroom with just sleep and sex, which makes it easier to wind down at night.

***Looking for even more sleep-related resources? Be sure to click over to this Here4TN's "Sleep Topic Center" [HERE](#). And remember, State health plan members can also get support for your sleep issues through ActiveHealth by calling 888-741-3390.***

Source: [helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org)



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