

Writing for Restful Sleep

Restful sleep is crucial for daily functioning: attention, energy, mental flexibility, and more. **Sleep hygiene** is those behaviors and practices that encourage healthy sleep.

There are many factors that impact sleep. After reading through the list below (which draws on information from sleep scientist Matthew Walker and others), use the space provided to (1) name what you already do well for sleep hygiene, (2) name tactics that might improve your sleep hygiene, and (3) imagine the ways that better sleep hygiene might improve your daily functioning. Might your focus improve? Might you have more energy?

- *Blue light* - it's good to stop screen use (or to use blue-light-reducing glasses) at least an hour before bed; blue light affects when you feel tired
- *Temperature* - studies show that the temperatures most conducive to sleep are 60-68 degrees fahrenheit
- *Schedule* - it's important to stick to a daily sleep schedule, even over the weekend
- *Time outside* - do something outside 30 minutes daily (the sun helps regulate your sleep cycle); if you struggle to sleep, try 60 minutes
- *Daily exercise* - do 30 minutes of exercise daily; if you struggle to sleep, try 60 minutes daily
- *Exercise timing* - leave 2-3 hours between exercise and the time you go to bed
- *Darkness* - keep your room dark; if you can't, try a sleep mask
- *Alcohol* - it's shown to keep you out of deep sleep, which is crucial for how refreshed and focused you feel; avoid alcohol to improve sleep
- *Meals* - leave a few hours between your last meal and when you go to bed; digestive issues can keep you up
- *Napping* - if struggling with sleep, avoid naps; if you are going to nap, be done napping about seven hours before you plan to go to bed for the night
- *Body temperature* - it's good to shower or bathe at night; when your body exits hot water, the drop in temperature you experience makes you feel tired

- After writing about sleep hygiene, if you feel like sharing, have a conversation with a friend or loved one. Also, keep in mind what you wrote because we'll invite you to reflect on it one more time at the end of this class!

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