



### Healthy Sleep Tips to Get the ZZZs You Deserve

By Lisa Fahney, BS, CHES

If you are like many Americans, you are not receiving the quality and quantity of sleep that you should each night. Think back to your sleep last night. Did you feel rested when you woke up in the morning? If the answer is no, consider following the healthy sleep tips listed below.

1. **Stick to a sleep schedule** of the same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends. This helps to regulate your body's clock.
2. **Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.** A relaxing, routine activity right before bedtime conducted away from bright lights helps separate your sleep time from activities that can cause excitement, stress or anxiety which can make it more difficult to fall asleep, get sound and deep sleep or remain asleep.
3. **Avoid naps**, especially in the afternoon. Power napping may help you get through the day, but if you find that you can't fall asleep at bedtime, eliminating even short catnaps may help.
4. **Exercise daily.** Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity. Exercise at any time of day, but not at the expense of your sleep.
5. **Evaluate your room.** Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep. Your bedroom should be cool - between 60 and 67 degrees and free from any noise that can disturb your sleep.
6. **Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.** The mattress you have been using for years may have exceeded its life expectancy - about 9 or 10 years for most good quality mattresses.
7. **Use bright light to help manage your circadian rhythms.** Avoid bright light in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the morning. This will keep your circadian rhythms in check.
8. **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and heavy meals in the evening.** If you can, avoid eating large meals for two to three hours before bedtime. Try a light snack 45 minutes before bed if you're still hungry.
9. **Wind down.** Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity such as reading.
10. If you can't sleep, **go into another room and do something relaxing** until you feel tired. It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment.
11. **If you're still having trouble sleeping, don't hesitate to speak with your doctor or to find a sleep professional.** You may also benefit from recording your sleep in a sleep diary to help you better evaluate common patterns or issues you may see with your sleep or sleeping habits.

### Workplace Eye Health and Safety

By Tracy Kiener, RPT, Industrial Rehab Consultant

You may think this topic doesn't apply to you, but eye problems and injuries occur in almost all jobs. Each day more than 2,000 Americans suffer an eye injury. About one in ten injuries require one or more missed days of work resulting in \$300 million in lost time.

The majority of work-related injuries and those that we think of most often are due to small particle abrasions of the eye or chemical splashes. Our eyesight, however, can also be damaged by computer work.

Computer vision syndrome is a reality. A person that has too much screen time and not enough breaks can experience headaches, inattentiveness, neck pain, back pain and dry eyes.

So what can you do to take care of your eyes?

#### If you work in an office environment:

1. *Keep the computer screen 30 inches away from you and angle it away from direct light (you can also get an anti-glare screen).*
2. *Blink often.*
3. *Remember the 20-20-20 rule, which is every 20 minutes look at an object 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.*
4. *Drink water.*

#### If you work in a factory setting:

1. *Know what the eye hazards are and where they're located.*
2. *Use machine guarding and work screens.*
3. *Wear the right eye protection. This has been shown to prevent up to 90 percent of eye injuries. Finally, get a regular eye exam every year. Your optometrist can help you recognize issues before they become bigger problems and preserve your sight for the long-term.*

Prevention is key, and so is awareness of conditions that increase risk for eye injury. Following these simple tips can help you avoid injuries at work and home!

## 5 Ways to Improve Connection in Relationships

We all know that often, over time, intimacy can fade between a couple and passion begins to disappear. Eventually feelings of togetherness and genuine affection can even morph into bitterness and resentment.

There are ways however to increase that feeling of connection between you and your partner, and make sustaining it a priority. Here are 5 powerful ways to get started.



### 1. Say Thank you for something Every Day

Show your partner how much you appreciate and value her or him. There are countless little ways to do this. It could start with something as simple and sincere as: “I really appreciate you making coffee. Thank you.”

### 2. Give Your Partner Your Full Attention at Least Once Per Day

Do this without looking at your Facebook feed, messing around with your smart phone or side-glancing at the TV. Drop what you’re doing when your partner wants to talk with you and focus all of your attention (and interest) on her or him by making full eye contact.

### 3. Be the First to Apologize for Your Role in Any Disconnect

Saying “I’m sorry” is not easy if you feel wronged, but you can say, “I want you to know, I’m sorry for my part last night and I love you.” There is no reason to defend yourself. You have said enough.

### 4. Show More Compassion and Consideration for What Your Partner is Going Through

A little kindness really does go a long way. You have no idea about the stress that replays itself in your partner’s mind. Try to understand what’s going on for her or him and show a little warmth.

### 5. Lighten Up and Be More Playful

Most disagreements and misunderstandings are little things that get blown out of proportion. Keep matters in perspective, find something to laugh about together and let a little fun cut the tension. There is no value in holding grudges.

When you focus on affection, togetherness, genuine feelings of caring- physical touch and heart-felt appreciation towards your partner, almost any relationship repair is possible. Strong communication skills are valuable, but only once healthy connection is in place.

Modified from: <https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2016/06/05/7-ways-to-improve-connection-in-your-relationship/>

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