

SLEEP HYGIENE CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Get up at the same time each day, 7 days a week.** A regular wake time leads to regular times of sleep onset and helps to set your biological clock.
- ☐ **Get enough sleep.** Allow yourself enough time to sleep at least 7 to 9 consecutive hours.
- ☐ **Only use the bed for sleep and sexual activity.** This will help condition your brain to see the bed as the place for sleeping. Do not read, watch TV, or eat in bed.
- ☐ **Get out of bed soon after waking up.** This will prevent you from falling back asleep.
- ☐ **Get exposure to bright light.** Sunshine is best. This will help reset your internal sleep clock (i.e., your circadian rhythm).
- ☐ **Exercise regularly.** A regular exercise routine can contribute to improved sleep and mood.
- ☐ **Avoid caffeine & stimulants late in the day.** Avoid caffeine after noon.
- ☐ **Unplug an hour before bed.** Keep screen use to a minimum, at least an hour before bed.
- ☐ **Make sure your bedroom is at a comfortable temperature during the night.** Excessively warm or cold sleep environments may disturb sleep.
- ☐ **Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.** Reducing liquid intake will minimize the need for night-time trips to the bathroom.
- ☐ **Get up & try again.** If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again. Sit quietly on the couch with the lights off (bright light will tell your brain that it is time to wake up), or read something boring like an electronics manual. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more.

Sleep is *fundamental* for maintaining good physical and mental health. It allows the brain to process and consolidate memories, regulate emotions, and restore the body's energy levels. Like a cell phone, a brain needs to be "recharged." Insufficient or poor-quality sleep can lead to, or exacerbate, a range of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, irritability, and mood swings. Without sufficient sleep, the brain becomes "drained" and it becomes harder to respond effectively to difficult thoughts, feelings, and situations.