

6 Essentials For a Good Sleep Environment



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Anxiety, stress, jet lag, a medical condition - all could be causes of a sleep disorder or insomnia. While treatment of such problems will vary from person to person, a good sleep environment is never a bad idea.

By creating such an environment, it could prove the necessary first step on your road to a better night's sleep (and all the positive effects that come with it). Here are five essentials to keep in mind when creating your own "good sleep environment."

1. Keep the Bedroom a Place To Sleep: In today's world many of us have laptop computers with wireless internet access, mobile phones, portable dvd players and a whole host of other distractions that can turn a bedroom into an office

But if you suffer from a sleep disorder make sure that you keep your bedroom a place to sleep and rest and don't allow any distractions that keep you from sleeping. Don't allow the bedroom to become an office, a playroom, or a TV room. Those who suffer from sleep disorders need to eliminate all distractions in the form of noise, light, or activity.

2. Ideal Temperature: When creating a good sleep environment, you need to make sure you minimise any discomfort. Being too cold or too hot can disrupt a comfortable sleep and once disrupted (for a person with a sleep disorder) it may be difficult to get back into a deep slumber.

Keeping the room at a constant, ideal temperature will help you get and *stay* asleep. While it's debatable as to what the best temperature is, it can be agreed upon that anything about 75 degrees Fahrenheit is too warm and anything below 54 degrees, too cold.

Try maintaining a temperature of between 60–70 degrees (65) as a compromise, but the deciding factor should be you personally and what you find to be "ideal." If you keep kicking the covers off or shivering yourself awake, adjust the temperature until it's just right – and make note of what that number is for you.

3. Comfortable Bed: One symptom of a sleep disorder or insomnia is tossing and turning during the night, and one reason you may be doing this is because your mattress is uncomfortable.

As with most anything in life, what's "right" for you (and your back, your posture, your comfort) is specific to your body. However, research has shown that supple mattresses may be more conducive to a good night's rest versus a firmer one.

Ideally you should turn your mattress every couple of months and make sure that you vacuum it as well to ensure that there are no bed bugs hiding in it.

Definitely avoid sleeping on a lumpy mattress if it can be helped. A new mattress may be in order if you've outgrown your current one, either in size or comfort. If you have a spouse who prefers a different type of mattress, consider getting the type of bed where each of you set the mattress to your perfect number.

4. Keep the Clock Out of Sight: If you can, try to keep your clock out of sight. Set your alarm and then put it somewhere else or turn it away from you - out of your general view. For instance, instead of having the clock on the bedside table, put it on the dresser in the far corner.

If a clock is visible, you may find yourself staring at it or waking up periodically to look at it. If you're making an effort to create a good sleep environment, it means that you're aware of an impairment.

If you're trying to break the cycle of sleeplessness, then it's important that you don't focus on time. Seeing how early it is or how little time has passed, can only lead to frustration.

5. No Lights: Remember that a dark bedroom can help your body “know” it’s time for rest. Artificial light disrupts our sleep patterns and you need darkness for your body to produce melatonin. This chemical makes us sleep. Poor sleep can also your immune systems making you more susceptible to illnesses such as colds.

To help the body adjust to a regular sleep cycle, make an effort to distinguish between daytime and bedtime.

When it’s time to sleep, keep light sources to a minimum, including when you get up to go to the bathroom. As with a TV, computer, or video game, you’ll want to avoid anything that can stimulate your brain or body out of rest. Even if your eyes are closed, light in your bedroom can disrupt your sleep.

6. Minimise Noise Levels: If you live on a busy main road the chances are that you will have traffic passing up and down your road most of the night. People who live on a main road get used to the constant noise of passing traffic, but some noises are very disruptive to sleep such as loud music coming from outside your house, barking dogs, or even aircraft if you live on a flight path.

Make sure you insulate your home as much as possible with double glazing on your windows to block out noise and heavy curtains or blinds on your bedroom window.

If these steps are taken, and a few other considerations, such as making a separate sleeping area for pets (that are used to sleeping with you) – then you should be on your way to eliminating some of the factors that may have been contributing to your persistent sleep problems.

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