

Healthy Sleep Habits

"Sleep is the best meditation"

-Dalai Lama

- **Develop a sleep ritual before bedtime.** This is some activity you do every night before you get into bed. (ex. a hot shower or bath, try not to study right up to the time you want to go to bed)
- **For relaxing tense muscles or a racing mind, use deep relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation or guided visualization.** (See your counselor for more information on this).
- **Make your sleeping environment comfortable, quiet, dark, cool and well ventilated.**
- **Reduce noise through the use of ear plugs or a noise-masking machine.**
- **Get up at a regular wake time each day.**
- **Use your bed for sleep and sex - not studying, tv, or eating.**
- **Avoid stimulants in your diet by late afternoon.** This includes caffeine in coffee, tea, cola and chocolate. (check over-the-counter medications for caffeine - found in many pain relievers.)
- **Alcohol – initially it may have a sedating effect but will lighten and fragment sleep as the night goes on.**
- **Exercise during the day.** For the greatest sleep benefit, schedule exercise in the afternoon and avoid strenuous exercise in the evening. Outdoor exercise is ideal, as studies show that people who get adequate natural sunlight tend to sleep better at night.
- **Don't try to make yourself sleep.** If you're unable to fall asleep after 20-30 minutes, leave your bed, engage in some relaxing activity and return when you begin to feel sleepy.
- **Avoid naps if possible.**
- **Avoid heavy meals before bedtime, or going to bed hungry (a small snack will work).**
- **If you suspect that emotional problems are causing sleeplessness, consult a counselor.** Depression and anxiety commonly produce insomnia.
- **Still no relief? Schedule an appointment with your doctor.**

