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KidsHealth **Parents** 10 Ways to Help Your Child Get a Better Night's Sleep

# 10 Ways to Help Your Child Get a Better Night's Sleep

Medically reviewed by: [Elana Pearl Ben-Joseph, MD](#)

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It's normal for kids and teens to go through phases where they struggle to get a good night's **sleep**. Sometimes, working on healthy sleep habits — also known as **sleep hygiene** — is enough to help them get better sleep. Everyone can benefit from working on sleep hygiene, especially kids and teens with insomnia.

## What Can Help Kids Sleep Better?

To help kids and teens get a better night's sleep, encourage them to:

1. **Follow a bedtime routine.** This might include activities like taking a warm bath or shower, listening to relaxing music, drinking chamomile tea, deep breathing, or light stretching. Anything that helps your child unwind and feel calm could work, and the routine could just be one or two activities.

2. **Limit bright lights and electronics at night.** Try to use dim, warm-colored lights in the evening, such as dimmable lights that have soft or warm bulbs. Limit bright lights and blue light from electronic devices, and use the “night setting” if the device has one. Experts recommend putting any screens away at least an hour before bedtime.
3. **Aim for a regular sleep schedule.** Going to bed and waking up at around the same times each day helps reset the [circadian](#) rhythm, or the body’s internal clock. This allows melatonin (a sleep hormone) to be released at the right time in the evening. Unless kids are sick or sleep-deprived, it’s best if they don’t sleep in more than an extra half hour on weekends and holidays.
4. **Keep the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.** If there’s noise and light that can’t be avoided, try giving your child earplugs and a sleep mask. Run an air conditioner or a fan to keep the room cool (unless your child sleeps better in a warm room).
5. **Plan for enough time in bed.** [School-age kids](#) need about 9–12 hours of sleep per night, while [teens](#) need about 8–10 hours. Note: Some kids and teens need more sleep than others, so those who are often tired may not be staying in bed long enough.
6. **Get some sunlight soon after waking up.** Seeing sunlight (or any bright light) shortly after waking up lets your brain know it’s time to slow its melatonin production and start getting ready for daytime. If you live in a place that doesn’t get much sunlight, consider giving your child a bright lamp to turn on after waking up.

7. **Avoid caffeine.** Experts recommend that young children not have [caffeine](#). Teens can have a small amount (no more than 100 mg or 1 cup of coffee per day), but it's best for everyone not to have any after around 3 p.m.
8. **Limit naps.** Unless your child really needs to catch up on sleep (such as when recovering from illness or injury), it's best to avoid daytime naps. Napping during the day most likely will keep kids up at night because they probably won't feel very sleepy.
9. **Get some exercise during the day.** Exercise has been shown to help people sleep better at night, as long as it happens *before* the evening. (Evening exercise can disrupt sleep.) Any activity that gets your child's heart rate up for at least 30–60 minutes during the day could result in better sleep.
10. **Get out of bed when all else fails.** When kids and teens are still wide awake after lying in bed for 30 minutes, or feeling anxious or frustrated, getting out of bed is actually a good idea. The bed is a place to feel relaxed and sleepy, not a place for tossing and turning. If they get out of bed and do something relaxing or boring, it can help bring about a feeling of sleepiness.

When trying these new habits, choose just one or two to start and add more as they become routine. Overwhelming kids with a long to-do list may cause stress and they're not likely to stick with it. Let your child decide what seems doable for now, and make the changes gradually.

## What Else Should I Know?

If your child follows these tips but still can't get enough sleep, talk to the doctor. Many sleep conditions, like [obstructive sleep apnea](#), need specific treatments to improve. In the meantime, avoid giving your child [melatonin](#), herbal supplements, or other sleep medicine unless the doctor recommends them, as they can cause negative side effects in children and teens.

Medically reviewed by: [Elana Pearl Ben-Joseph, MD](#)

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# 10 Way to Help Your Child Get a Better Night's Sleep

Post Test – October 2024

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1. Everyone can benefit from working on sleep \_\_\_\_\_, especially kids and teens with insomnia.
2. Experts recommend putting any screens away at least an \_\_\_\_\_ before bedtime.
3. Going to bed and waking up at around the same times each day helps reset the circadian rhythm, or the body's internal clock.  
True or False?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ kids need about 9-12 hours of sleep per night, while \_\_\_\_\_ need about 8-10 hours.
5. Seeing \_\_\_\_\_ shortly after waking up lets your brain know it's time to slow its melatonin production and start getting ready for daytime.
6. Experts recommend that young children not have \_\_\_\_\_, it's best for everyone not to have any after around 3 pm.
7. Unless your child really needs to catch up on sleep (such as when recovering from illness or injury), it's best to enjoy daytime naps.  
True or False?
8. Any activity that gets your child's \_\_\_\_\_ up for at least 30-60 minutes during the day could result in better sleep.
9. If they get out of bed and do something relaxing or boring, it can help bring about a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Avoid giving your child \_\_\_\_\_, herbal supplements or other sleep medicine unless the doctor recommends them, as they can cause negative side effects in children and teens.

September 2024 Quiz Answers. 1.Intense 2.True 3.Step Away 4.Exercise  
5.Tension 6.False 7.Vent/Isolated 8.Pressure 9.Depression 10.Love.



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