

Tips to Improve Your Sleep

April L. Mentzer MSW

Statewide Remote SASH Support Coordinator

1. Check in with your health care provider:

- It's a good idea to report changes in your sleep schedule to your medical providers as they may be a sign of an underlying medical condition.
- While speaking with your health care provider-you can ask questions about whether the medications you are currently taking may contribute to your difficulty sleeping. Sometimes it is possible under your health care provider's supervision to take medications earlier in the day to reduce their negative impact on your sleep.

2. Find a counselor who can help you with changing your daily habits around sleep:

- Your SASH Team can help you find a counselor or you can look on [Psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) to search for a counselor in your area.

3. Track your sleep using the sleep log.

4. Tips to work with your circadian rhythm:

- Get morning sunshine
- Follow a consistent sleep schedule- going to bed and waking up at the same time of day
- Exercise
- Limit caffeine to before lunch
- Avoid artificial light (from computer screens) up to two hours before bedtime
- Keep naps short (15-20 minutes) and earlier in the afternoon
- Have a wind down routine to help cue your body that you are getting ready for bed
- Don't bathe two hours before bedtime (this increases your body temperature)

5. Set up your bedroom environment for sleep:

- Make your bed comfy- consider replacing an older mattress & upgrading sheets, and bedcovers to breathable fabrics
- Set the thermostat to 65 degrees
- Use light blocking curtains or an eye pillow to reduce intrusive lights
- Use a white noise machine or ear plugs to manage disruptive sounds
- Switch your lightbulbs to warm white 3500 Kelvin or lower

6. What to do when you can't fall asleep:

- Get out of bed if it is taking you longer than 25 minutes to fall asleep
- Go into another room if possible
- Do a soothing activity like reading, listening to a book on tape, some gentle yoga, breathing exercise, progressive muscle relaxation, or body scan
- Get back into bed when you start to feel tired again

7. Practice relaxation response:

- Practice for 10-20 minutes, 1-2 times a day
- Sitting or lying quietly
- Closing eyes or having a restful gaze
- Approach with a non-judgmental stance/ accept that you will achieve at your own pace
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation or Body Scan Technique
- Abdominal breathing with a mantra "one" or another mantra you like

8. Take time to Prevent Stress/ Practice Self Care daily see menu of self-care activities.

9. Transform your automatic negative thoughts to more realistic expansive thoughts.

10. Reach out to your SASH Team for support.

11. Check out additional resources page for more ideas and information.