



Improving Sleep Habits During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all New Yorkers who are struggling with feelings of loss, uncertainty, fear of the virus and grief. As a result, some people might experience higher levels of depression and anxiety that can cause trouble sleeping, including difficulty falling or staying asleep or unintentionally waking up too early. Many people are also dealing with recent and/or ongoing trauma related to racism, discrimination, police brutality or other injustices that may contribute to depression, anxiety and related sleeping issues.

Good sleep habits are important for overall health. Most adults need seven or eight hours of sleep per night, but others might need more or less than that. Poor sleep can have a negative impact on both your mental and physical health.

Tips to Improve Sleep Habits

Here are some tips if you are having trouble sleeping:

- Establish a sleep routine.
- Avoid lying down or napping during daytime hours.
- Lower the amount of caffeine you drink (such as coffee, tea, soda and energy drinks), and avoid drinking caffeine after early afternoon.
- Talk with your health care provider if you are taking any over-the-counter medications or health supplements that may impact your sleep.
- Minimize how much alcohol you drink or nicotine you use.
 - If you smoke or vape, consider quitting. Visit nyc.gov/health and search for [NYC Quits](#) or call **311**.
- Increase your physical activity by moving more and sitting less—choose [activities that allow for physical distancing](#) of at least 6 feet if you go outside.
- Make sure you wake up at a similar time every day (including weekends), even if you have trouble sleeping the night before.
- Practice relaxation techniques before going to bed.
- Make sure you go to bed when you are tired and ready to sleep.
- Avoid using any screens (such as smart phones or tablet computers) or watching television in bed.
- Avoid watching the clock, and cover or hide it if necessary.

If you still have trouble sleeping after trying these tips, talk to your provider or contact:

- NYC Well, a confidential 24/7 helpline staffed by trained counselors who provide brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages. Call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text “WELL” to 65173 or chat at nyc.gov/nycwell.

- The New York State COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline, staffed with specially trained volunteer professionals who listen, support and offer referrals to care, if needed. Call 844-863-9314, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days per week.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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