

## Health is not a condition of matter, but of mind

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### Sleep Tight – Part II

~ What has four legs but only one foot? A bed ~

A good night's sleep is invaluable. It is something that is not really appreciated until you don't get it, and when you have not slept well for a few days, it is something you would do just about anything to get.

~ What horse sleeps only at night? A nightmare. ~

When there is difficulty sleeping or with getting good sleep that allows for a well-rested feeling, there are a number of suggestions that can help with what doctors call "good sleep hygiene."

Suggestions that improve and maintain good sleep include: sleeping just as much as needed to feel rested and then getting out of bed, maintaining a regular sleeping schedule, not forcing sleep to come, avoiding caffeine, limiting alcohol, avoiding tobacco, not going to bed hungry, making the bedroom darker or more quiet and getting regular exercise—preferably a few hours before bedtime.

~ Why do people go to bed? Because it won't come to them. ~

The amount of caffeine in your body decreases slowly over time. For example, when you drink a cup of coffee, the caffeine quickly enters the body and goes to work. It takes the body six hours to break down half of this caffeine.

For example, after six hours there will be about half-a-cup worth of caffeine left in the system. Then, after 12 hours there will be about ¼ of a cup's worth left.

So, by avoiding caffeine after lunch or in the afternoon, your body will have the chance to get rid of most of it, so you will be able to sleep when you want to.

~ What over-powers you without hurting you? Sleep ~

When a person has a hard time sleeping, the difficulty with sleeping becomes bothersome and worrying. This person may spend a large amount of time in their beds while worrying they are unable to sleep and they will be tired for the coming day. This person then associates these worries with lying in bed and the entire process can become stressful.

The longer that the person spends in bed trying to sleep, the worse the situation becomes and the more that they worry. For this reason, people should not spend more than 20 minutes lying in bed while trying to sleep. If they are still awake after 20 minutes, they should leave the bed and do something relaxing, such as reading or listening to relaxing music.

One key is to not reward your self for being awake in the middle of the night—this means no TV and no eating when you get up, otherwise this become associated with being awake and can make it more pleasurable, the opposite of what you actually want to do.

Then do not return to the bed until tired, again not spending more than 20 minutes in bed. An alarm clock should be used to get up at the same time every morning, including weekends. This will get the body onto a good schedule and help with the sleeping habits. Daytime naps should also be avoided. The more tired and on-schedule the body is, the better sleep will be at night.

~ Why is breakfast in bed so easy? It is just a couple of rolls and a turnover ~

Some people with difficulty sleeping will sleep in during the morning to catch up on the missed sleep. This just further gets the body out of whack by throwing off the circadian rhythm. By keeping a schedule and then going to bed when the body is tired, more healthy sleeping patterns can be achieved.

~ What question can never be answered with a "yes?" —"Are you asleep?" ~