

Sleep Hygiene Practices

Worksheets Guide +
Meditative Breathwork Video

Sleep Hygiene Practices

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Sleep Hygiene Practices

Sleep hygiene practices:

1. Establish a consistent sleep routine

To help you adopt a consistent sleep routine, it will be helpful for you to choose one of the times suggested below and commit to going to bed at that time for the next 30 days. This is what I refer to as your 'Lights Out Time' – the time that you'll be turning your lights off, putting your head down and going to sleep.

Lights Out Time: 9:30pm or 10pm

My recommendation would be 9:30pm, or even earlier at 9pm if you have a really inconsistent sleep pattern, but obviously the choice is yours.

2. Relaxing pre-sleep rituals

Your pre-sleep rituals should begin a minimum of 30 minutes before your Lights Out Time, but you can certainly extend beyond half an hour should you wish to, 1 hour before your Lights Out Time would be ideal. To create your pre-sleep ritual, on the following page I've provided you with a list of ideas you might like to adopt. You can choose one or two but I would suggest no more than two.

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List of pre-sleep rituals:

- Aromatherapy: using essential oils like lavender or chamomile in a diffuser
- Deep breathing
- Drinking chamomile or peppermint tea
- Gentle stretching
- Journalling: reflecting on the day, writing down what you're grateful for
- Listening to soft ambient music or nature sounds
- Meditation
- Reading
- Warm bath
- Warm shower

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3. Digital detox

Before going to sleep you should limit your use of digital devices. Reading books on a device like a Kindle is fine, but during your pre-sleep ritual time you should be avoiding activities such as watching TV or using your mobile phone for activities such as browsing on social media, checking emails, messaging or viewing websites.

Listening to soft meditative or ambient music from your mobile phone is fine, as long as you're not falling asleep with the phone positioned close to your head.

4. Healthy pre-bedtime eating and drinking habits

Establishing supportive pre-bedtime eating habits can help promote comfort and stability within the body as you prepare for sleep. Many people find that allowing a gap between their last meal and bedtime supports not only relaxation and a smoother transition into rest, but may also support a more settled night's sleep.

As a general guideline, you may find it helpful to finish eating 3 hours before beginning your pre-sleep rituals. For example, if your usual lights-out time is between 9:30pm and 10:00pm, having your final meal earlier in the evening may support a more settled night.

Similarly, some individuals find that limiting stimulants earlier in the day may support a calmer night's rest. From midday onwards, you may wish to reduce or avoid coffee and other caffeine-containing beverages if you notice they interfere with your ability to unwind and rest comfortably.

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Breaking your coffee habit

If you typically consume multiple caffeinated beverages per day and would like to gradually reduce your intake, the following example may help you taper more comfortably over several days. This is a general suggestion and can be adjusted based on personal preference and tolerance.

- Day 1: Up to 2 cups of caffeinated beverages before midday
- Day 2: Up to 1 cup of caffeinated beverages before midday
- Day 3: Up to ½ cup of caffeinated beverages before midday
- Day 4: Up to ¼ cup of caffeinated beverages before midday
- Day 5: Caffeine-free

5. Create a sleep-friendly environment

Creating a supportive sleep environment can help promote relaxation and make it easier for your body to settle into rest. Many people find that treating the bedroom as a calm, sleep-focused space contributes to a more comfortable and consistent night-time routine.

You may wish to aim for a bedroom environment that feels dark during sleep hours, relatively quiet, and set at a temperature that feels comfortable for you, as these factors are commonly associated with a more settled sleep experience.

Meditative Breathwork Practices

1. Qigong diaphragm breathing

Guided Meditative Breathwork Video

If you'd like additional guidance, you can watch the accompanying meditative breathwork video here:

▶ [Watch the guided breathwork video](#)

This video supports the breathing practices outlined below and can be used whenever you want a calmer, more settled state.

Important Note on Breathwork & Relaxation Practices

The breathing and relaxation practices included in this guide are intended to support relaxation, stress regulation, and general wellbeing only. They are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or influence specific medical or physiological conditions.

This breathing practice focuses on slow, controlled diaphragmatic breathing to encourage relaxation throughout the body. By gently engaging the diaphragm and abdominal area, this exercise helps promote a sense of calm and ease, particularly during periods of heightened stress or tension.

Many people find that slow, rhythmic breathing supports a greater awareness of the body and encourages a more relaxed internal state, which can be helpful when winding down before rest.

Step 1. Focus on the area of the body called the Dantian, an area of focus in the practice of Qi/Chi. The Dantian is located approximately an inch below your belly button and is the energy centre where Qi (energy) is stored. During your practice, imagine the Dantian as a glowing white light that you'll be breathing in to.

Step 2. Close your eyes and relax your whole body, particularly the abdomen area. Inhale through your nose, breathing deep into the Dantian (the white glowing light) as you do, and gently expand and push out your abdomen. From the top of your diaphragm to below your belly button is the area that you need to focus on expanding and contracting, making sure your abdomen is very relaxed with no tension, much like a balloon expanding and contracting.

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Step 3. While still focusing on the Dantian, exhale through the mouth, letting your abdomen naturally contract.

As you inhale and exhale it's important that you do so in one continuous, relaxed breath, making sure that you don't hold your breath in between.

When you first begin practising this exercise, if the length of time you can inhale and exhale for isn't very long, that's fine. Don't force it – over time this will increase. The real goal here is to generate a deep feeling of relaxation and calm within the gut and throughout your entire body.

2. Diaphragm breathing for lymph stimulation

This breathing exercise is designed to support relaxation and gentle movement within the body through controlled, mindful breathing. Deep, steady breathing encourages a calm nervous system response and supports overall circulation and oxygenation.

Breathing practices like this are commonly used as part of relaxation routines to help the body transition out of a heightened stress state and into a more settled, regulated rhythm.

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To perform this breathing exercise there is a breathing ratio to follow: inhale for one count, hold for four counts, and exhale for two counts.

So if you were to inhale for two seconds, you would hold for eight seconds and exhale for four seconds.

Holding the breath for longer counts and extending the exhale is commonly used in relaxation practices to encourage slower breathing patterns and a calmer nervous system response.

You can begin practising this breathing exercise with your eyes open or closed. Start off by inhaling for two seconds, holding for eight and exhaling for four. As you breathe in, expand and breathe deep into your abdomen. Over time, aim to increase your breathing counts, starting by inhaling for three, holding for twelve and exhaling for six.

3. The mantra 'slow'

This mantra exercise will also help you achieve a state of inner calm and relaxation. Simply close your eyes and repeat the word 'slow' within the mind, really make sure that you embody this word while breathing normally and releasing all tension as you do. When you first practise this, your mind may begin to wander and think of other things, but just keep coming back to the word 'slow' and repeating it within your mind. To help you move further into a state of calm and relaxation, you can also focus on the Dantian while repeating this mantra.

These practices are intended to support a sense of comfort and relaxation within the body. When practiced consistently, they may help you feel more settled, less reactive, and better able to manage the physical sensations that often accompany stress.