

R.E.A.L GoalsSM: Improve Sleep

(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)

Disclaimer – The information below is not appropriate, and we advise you to talk with your doctor about treatment options if you have all of the following sleep characteristics:

- Difficulty falling asleep and or staying asleep
- Daytime consequences (e.g., fatigue, concentration, and mood problems) or distress
- Chronicity - it happens on at least half the nights and occurs for at least three months
- Not attributable to another problem, such as medication



The benefits: I will sleep seven hours or more five days this week.

(Adults should get seven to nine hours of sleep daily.)

- Improves the ability to learn, problem-solve, pay attention, make decisions, retain and recall information.
- Reduces the risk of depression, risk-taking behavior, and suicide.
- Improves mood, motivation, and productivity.
- Assists with proper immune system function.
- Reduces the risk of health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart and kidney disease, obesity, and stroke.

Allow enough time to sleep

- Both the quality AND quantity of sleep are essential.
- Try changing your routine so you can go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, allowing yourself seven to nine hours of sleep.
- Keep the same sleep schedule on weeknights and weekends, limiting the difference to no more than about an hour. Staying up late or sleeping in can disrupt your circadian rhythm, which is a 24-hour cycle our body tries to maintain and regulate.

Prepare for sleeping

- Avoid electronics with a screen an hour before bedtime.
- Put your phone on do not disturb mode. Most phones have settings that will allow people you have selected to ring if they try to contact you while on do not disturb.
- Take a hot bath or use other relaxation techniques.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, cool, and dark.
- Save heavy and rich meals for breakfast and lunch when you need daytime energy and have lighter meals for dinner. Avoid foods that may cause heartburn or upset your stomach.
- Consume water and other beverages sparingly an hour before going to bed.

- Limit or avoid alcohol, which may help you fall asleep quickly but lead to disruptive, restless sleep. For sleep, quantity and quality are essential.

Make healthy choices daily

- Spend time outside every day; the natural light may help your body's circadian rhythm.
- Avoid the stimulants nicotine and caffeine well before bedtime. For example, drink coffee only in the first half of your workday.
- Physical activity towards the end of the day may help with the quality of your sleep.
- For some people, a short 15-20 minute nap in the early afternoon can boost alertness.

If you're a shift worker

- Take short naps when possible.
- Increase the amount of time available for sleep.
- Keep the lights bright at work.
- Limit shift changes so your body clock can adjust.
- Limit caffeine to the first part of your shift.
- Remove sound and light distractions in your bedroom during daytime sleep (e.g., Use light-blocking curtains).

Assess your sleep

- Talk with your doctor about your sleep concerns or a potential sleep study.
- Keep a sleep journal to track your sleep patterns and see if anything you try is helping.

For more information, check out the online resources below:

[National Sleep Foundation](#)

[Sleep.Org](#) - Sleep Hygiene

[WebMD](#) – 20 Tips for Better Sleep

Explore more [Real Goals and Supplemental Resources](#)

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