



Tips for Sleeping

More than one in five people (22%) say their sleep quality has suffered since the rise of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.¹ However, sleep is an essential part of protection from and response to any infection.²

But take heart, you CAN get a good night's sleep.

Treat symptoms first

MS symptoms such as spasticity, frequent trips to the bathroom (nocturia), or periodic limb movements in sleep (PLMS) can disturb sleep.

MS symptoms and sleep problems can feel difficult to untangle. For example, MS fatigue can be confused with lack of sleep. Speak to your physician about treatments to manage these sleep-disturbing symptoms. Then review bedtime habits.

What are "good sleep habits"?

- Regularity is key. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day—and no more than one hour later on weekends. Regularity helps set your biological clock
- Clear your mind before bed. Do you rehash the day's problems or worry about tomorrow once you are in bed? It may help to write a list of today's worries and things to do tomorrow well before bedtime.
- Create a bedtime ritual to signal the body and mind to slow down. It might be listening to music, reading, or writing in a journal.
- Urinate before going to bed. Don't drink a lot of fluids just before bedtime.
- Make sure your bedroom is cool, quiet and dark.
- Try a relaxation technique that you like (breathing, imagery or muscle relaxation) once the lights are off.
- Use your bedroom for sleeping and sex only. Don't read, watch TV, or talk on the phone in bed.
- If you don't fall asleep within 15-20 minutes... get up. Don't stay in bed and watch the clock. Do something boring and relaxing (read something light or watch an old movie).

¹ Sleep Help. *The Effects of COVID-19 On Sleep*. <https://www.sleephelp.org/covid-19-impact-on-sleep/?mod=article> inline. Accessed Mar. 30, 2020.

² Popescu, Adam. *How To Get More Sleep Tonight*. New York Times. Mar. 25, 2020.

Other ideas that can help

- Exercise about 4-6 hours before bedtime. Exercise is a stimulant, so don't exercise close to bedtime.
- Limit your caffeine use to the morning. Don't use alcohol and nicotine within 6 hours of bedtime.
- Some medications interfere with sleep. Check your prescriptions, over the counter meds, and any supplements you use with your doctor.
- Depression and emotional problems can keep you up—and more. Ask for a referral to a mental-health professional.

Are you spending enough time in bed but still waking up tired or feeling sleepy during the day?

If MS symptoms are under control and self-help isn't working, consider asking for a referral to a sleep specialist.

Take sleep seriously—and you CAN sleep on it! Pleasant dreams!

More information:

[American Academy of Sleep Medicine "Coronavirus FAQs"](#)

[National Sleep Foundation](#)

[Can Do MS "Sleep and MS"](#)

[National MS Society "Sleep"](#)