

# "Sleep Smarter: The Essential Guide To Sleep Hygiene Through Ayurveda"

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Although research has demonstrated links between individual sleep hygiene components and subsequent sleep, evidence for the efficacy of sleep hygiene education as a treatment for insomnia has been limited and inconclusive. Sleep hygiene is defined as a set of behavioural and environmental recommendations intended to promote healthy sleep<sup>1</sup>. It was originally developed for use in the treatment of mild to moderate insomnia. During sleep hygiene education, patients learn about healthy sleep habits and are encouraged to follow a set of recommendations to improve their sleep (e.g., avoid caffeine, eliminate noise from the sleeping environment, maintain a regular sleep schedule)<sup>2-5</sup>.

Sleep hygiene refers to the practices and habits that are necessary to have goodnight time sleep quality and full daytime alertness. Good sleep hygiene is crucial for maintaining both physical and mental health, enhancing productivity, and improving overall quality of life.

## Why Sleep Hygiene Matters

Poor sleep hygiene can lead to sleep deprivation, which has numerous negative effects on the body and mind. Lack of sleep can impair cognitive functions, reduce concentration, and negatively impact mood.

## Practices for Good Sleep Hygiene

- 1. Maintain a Regular Sleep Schedule:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This helps regulate your body's internal clock and can help you fall asleep and wake up more easily.
- 2. Create a Restful Environment:** Ensure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool. A comfortable mattress and pillows can also make a big difference.
- 3. Limit Exposure to Screens Before Bed:** The blue light emitted by phones, tablets, computers, and TVs can interfere with your ability to fall asleep. Try to turn off these devices at least an hour before bedtime.
- 4. Be Mindful of Food and Drink:** Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime. These can disrupt sleep or make it harder to fall asleep.
- 5. Incorporate Relaxation Techniques:** Engage in calming activities before bed, such as reading, taking a warm bath, or practicing meditation or deep-breathing exercises.

➤ There are several common sleep disorders that can affect the quality, timing, and duration of sleep. Here are some of the most prevalent ones:

- 1. Insomnia:** This is characterized by difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early and not being able to go back to sleep. It can be short term (acute) or long-term (chronic).
- 2. Sleep Apnea:** This disorder involves repeated interruptions in breathing during sleep. The most common type is obstructive sleep apnoea, where the airway becomes blocked, often causing loud snoring and daytime fatigue.

**3. Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS):** This condition causes an uncontrollable urge to move the legs, usually due to uncomfortable sensations. It typically occurs in the evening or nighttime hours when you're sitting or lying down.

**4. Narcolepsy:** This is a neurological disorder that affects the control of sleep and wakefulness. People with narcolepsy experience excessive daytime sleepiness and sudden episodes of falling asleep during the day.

**5. Parasomnias:** These are disruptive sleep-related behaviors, such as sleepwalking, sleep talking, and night terrors. They can occur during different stages of life.

**In Ayurveda,** sleep is considered one of the three pillars of good health, along with food (ahara) and control over sexual energy (brahmacharya).

### Doshas and Sleep

Ayurveda identifies three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Each dosha influences sleep differently.

**Vata:** Excess Vata can lead to light, restless sleep. To balance Vata, it's recommended to consume warm, heavy foods like dairy, soups.

□ **Pitta:** Pitta imbalances can cause difficulty falling asleep due to an overactive mind. Cooling foods and calming activities before bed can help.

□ **Kapha:** Kapha dominance promotes deep, heavy sleep. However, excess Kapha can lead to oversleeping and lethargy. Light, stimulating activities and foods can balance Kapha.

### Sleep hygiene in ayurveda.

#### Ayurvedic Sleep Routine

□ **Timing:** Follow the Ayurvedic clock, which divides the day into six zones dominated by different doshas. It's best to wake up before sunrise and sleep before 10 p.m., during the Kapha period.

□ **Environment:** Create a cool, dark, and clutter-free bedroom to support the body's natural healing processes during the night.

□ **Diet:** Have a light dinner at least two hours before bedtime. Avoid stimulants like caffeine and heavy meals close to bedtime.

### Importance of Nidra.

Happiness, misery, nourishment, emaciation, strength, weakness, virility, sterility, knowledge, ignorance, life and death all these occur depending on the proper or improper sleep. Like the night of destructions, untimely and excessive sleep and prolonged vigil take away both happiness and longevity.<sup>6</sup>

### Physiology of sleep.

When the mind (as well as the soul) gets exhausted or become inactive and the sensory and motor organs become inactive then the individual gets sleep. Sleep is nothing but the location of the mind in a place unconnected with the sensory or motor organs. In the event of the exhaustion of the mind, the individuals also get exhausted because action of individuals is dependent on that of the mind; so, when mind dissociates itself from its objects, individuals also dissociate themselves from their objects. The sensory and motor organs are not active because of the inaction of individuals.<sup>7</sup>

### Methods and measures to induce good sleep.

If for some reason or other, one is subjected to sleepless-ness, he can be instantaneously cured by massage, unction, bath, intake of soup of domestic marshy and aquatic animals, śālī rice with curd, milk, unctuous substance and alcohol, psychic pleasure, smell of scents and bearing of sounds of one's own taste, application of soothing ointment to the eyes, head and face, comfortable bed and home and proper time.<sup>8</sup>

**Shayana vidhi (sleeping method):** After meals a person should lie down in Supine position for a period of 8 breathings and for a period of twice (16 breathings) on right side for double that time (32 breathings) on his left side, afterwards as found convenient.<sup>9</sup>

After taking lagu(light)and hita ahara(wholesome food) in the evening, one should go to bed with calm & quite mind, offering prayers to God. Bed should be arranged in a place which is clean, devoid of too many people with 2/3 like-minded people with suitable pillow which is broad even & comfortable. The cot should be of the height of one's knee, Soft & beautiful. Head should be placed towards East or South & Legs not stretched towards Teachers and elders. The bedroom should be in the south -west direction of the house. One should think of only dharma at the time of going to bed.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

Prioritizing good sleep hygiene can significantly improve your sleep quality and overall health. By making small changes to your daily routine and environment, you can enjoy the benefits of better sleep and a more energized, productive life.

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