What is sleep hygiene? "Sleep hygiene" is used to describe good sleep habits. Many of us don’t pay attention to our sleeping habits but they are essential.

**YOUR PERSONAL HABITS**
- **Fix a Bedtime and an Awakening Time**
  The body "gets used" to falling asleep at a certain time, but only if this is relatively fixed.
- **Avoid Napping During the Day**
  Or make sure you limit the nap to 20-30 minutes.
- **Avoid Caffeine & Alcohol 4-6 Hours Before Bed**
- **Exercise, But Not Before Bed**
  Strenuous exercise within two hours before bedtime can interfere with your ability to fall asleep.

**YOUR SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT**
- **Use Comfortable Bedding**
  Find comfortable bedding and a good temperature to keep the room well ventilated.
- **Block Out All Distracting Noise**
  Also eliminate as much light as possible.
- **Reserve the Bed for the Three S’s: Sleep, Sex, and Sickness**
  Don’t use the bed as an office. Let your body "know" that the bed is associated only with the Three S’s.

**GETTING READY FOR BED**
- **Try a Light Snack Before Bed**
  Warm milk and foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, such as bananas, may help you sleep.
- **Use Relaxation Techniques and Don’t Take Your Worries to Bed**
- **Get Into Your Favorite Sleeping Position**
  Don’t toss and turn in bed. If you think it’s been more than 30 minutes, get up, and do a relaxing activity (try light reading).

**A WORD ABOUT ELECTRONICS**
Using electronics before bedtime is often a bad idea. They are engaging objects that tend to keep people awake. Some people find that listening to music helps them fall asleep since it is a less engaging activity.

**OTHER FACTORS**
Several physical factors are known to upset sleep. These include sleep apnea, pain, arthritis, acid reflux with heartburn, menstruation, headaches and hot flashes. Many medications can cause sleeplessness as a side effect. Psychological and mental health problems like depression, anxiety and stress are often associated with sleeping difficulty.

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