

## How to get a good night's sleep

**B**efore you reach for the sleeping pills, read this article and try these simple tips. Barring any medical condition that might be keeping you awake or disturbing your normal sleep pattern, these tips can help aid you in getting a good night's sleep!

**Tip #1:** The last thing you need at bedtime or at a time close to it, is a stimulant. Stimulants include caffeine which is commonly found in most coffee, soda pop, and chocolate candy. Drink or eat these caffeinated foodstuffs only in the daytime or in the early evening hours as long as your bedtime is a few hours away.

**Tip #2:** Do try drinking a glass of milk before you go to bed. Believe it or not, milk does really have a soothing effect on some people, and may help produce sweet dreams for you tonight. (And no, it doesn't have to be warm to be effective, but you can heat it up if you want to.)

**Tip #3:** Is your bed mattress comfortable? How about your pillow? Lay down on your bed and pillow and give them an honest self-test. Is your mattress actually too hard or soft for your body? If you share your bed with a partner, are you sleeping on a mattress that's too soft because they prefer it? If that's the case, you can easily remedy the situation by measuring half of the bed. Then, get a piece of plywood the exact size of the measurements you took. Simply slide the plywood underneath your side of the bed, and presto! Your side of the bed is firmer, while your mate's side is still as soft as he or she prefers it.

**Tip #4 :** What about the rest of your bedroom? Is it conducive to getting a good night's sleep?



A bedroom setting should be peaceful and quiet. If traffic noise or other outside noise disturbs you, you might try turning a fan on. You can also try turning a radio on with a timer that you can program. It will play for a specified period of time while you relax your mind and body. (Naturally, you should tune in a station that plays a relaxing type of music.) If you don't mind investing the money, you can buy a machine that creates "white noise." This machine drowns out other noise so that you can fall asleep undisturbed. Is your bedroom dark enough? Do street lights stream through the windows and interfere with your sleep? If this is a problem, purchase window shades or blinds or heavy drapes and install them in all of the windows. On the other hand, is it too dark in your bedroom? Some people would rather have a little light in their bedroom, and for these "light" sleepers, a nightlight or small lamp is the perfect solution.

**Tip #5:** Is your mind full of worries and concerns? Try this simple exercise: pretend that your mind is a chalk board. Every time a worrisome thought enters your mind, pretend that it is written on the chalk board, and immediately erase it. Keep erasing these thoughts as they pop up and refuse to think about them until tomorrow.

# Easy Ways to Exercise Throughout the Day

## Take the stairs

If you work in a building with an elevator, try taking the stairs at least once a day. It may take a little bit longer, but you'll be burning fat while you walk.

## Suck it in

It sounds silly, but sucking in your stomach throughout the day can actually help tighten your abs and whittle your waist. No one even has to know you're doing it. Just suck in your stomach for five minutes of time throughout the day.

## Start fidgeting

Fidgeting actually does burn calories, particularly if you're someone who always sits stills. We're not advocating driving your co-workers insane with constant movement, but fidgeting with your feet under the desk can make a difference.

## Use housework

Housework can actually burn more calories than running and as an extra bonus, your house will be spic and span. Try to set aside thirty minutes a day to vacuum, dust and sweep. You'll be getting a good workout and you'll be getting your heart rate up.

## Get creative

If your options are pretty limited, try finding ways to exercise on your lunch break. Walk around outside or at a mall. You'll burn more calories than you would simply sitting at a table.

## Try leg bends

You can really work on your lower body without anyone noticing by practicing leg bends under your desk. This is great if you're frequently on the phone and bored out of your skull. Simply unbend your knees and raise up your legs - hold the position for a few seconds and lower them back down. Try several repetitions of this throughout the day.

## *Shrimp Veracruzana*

4 servings – 1 cup each

Preparation time: 30 minutes

- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 medium onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and very thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound peeled and deveined raw shrimp
- 3 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced pitted green olives
- 1 lime, cut into 4 wedges

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add bay leaf and cook for 1 minute. Add onion, jalapeños and garlic and cook, stirring, until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in shrimp, cover and cook until pink and just cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and olives. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to medium-low, replace cover and cook until the tomatoes are almost broken down, 2 to 3 minutes more. Remove the bay leaf. Serve with lime wedges

**Per serving:** 192 calories; 6 g fat (1 g sat, 3 g mono); 172 mg cholesterol; 11 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 24 g protein; 2 g fiber; 324 mg sodium; 516 mg potassium.

