

Health Minute

Sleep your way to better blood pressure...

Are you getting enough sleep? A recent study published by the American Heart Association suggests that your risk of developing high blood pressure is higher if you are middle-aged and you sleep five hours or less per night. Sleep allows the heart to slow down and blood pressure to drop for a large portion of your day. When you sleep for shorter periods than your body needs, you raise your average 24-hour blood pressure and pulse rate. Having trouble sleeping? Before asking your doctor for a prescription, try instituting *sleep hygiene*, a list of tips to help you get a good night's sleep. Your goal is 7 to 8 hours per night.



Prepare yourself for sleep	Prepare your room for sleep
<p>Avoid late naps Have a routine – go to bed at the same time, wake up at the same time. Do not allow yourself to lie in bed worrying about problems – set aside time during your day for that Avoid reading or watching TV in bed Avoid exercise, caffeine, smoking, large meals, or lots of fluids close to bedtime If you don't fall asleep right away, get out of bed and do something boring until you become tired</p>	<p>Ensure a dark environment unless you are reassured by a night light. Ensure a quiet environment or use some low-level noise like a fan or sound machine Make sure your mattress is adequately firm and comfortable Elevate the head of the bed slightly if you suffer from acid reflux If you have allergies, take steps to create an allergen-free zone in your bedroom</p>

Sleep