

Tips For A Good Night's Sleep

Nothing affects your quality of life more than the way you sleep. It's a simple truth: better nights means better days. Get the facts to help ensure you wake up refreshed, rejuvenated and ready for the day.

Some of the Sleep Tips below are from Dr. James B. Maas, Professor of Psychology at Cornell University. Dr. Maas teaches and conducts research on the relationship between sleep and performance. He is the author of the New York Times Best Seller, Power Sleep: The Revolutionary Program That Prepares Your Mind for Peak Performance. His most recent book, Remmy and the Brain Train, is an award-winning children's bedtime story about the need for sleep. Dr. Maas makes frequent television appearances on such programs as NBC's TODAY Show, Good Morning America, The View, ABC's 20/20, and Oprah.

Creating the ideal bedroom environment.

There are three things a bedroom should be in order to promote good sleep -- quiet, dark and cool.

Quiet

Fans or other white noise generators near the bed can help mute sleep distractions. A cheaper alternative is to set the tuner of your FM radio between any two stations. The pseudo white noise you'll hear will do wonders to mask unwanted sounds.

Light Level

Use room darkening shades or dark fabrics to reduce the amount light leaking into the room. Eyeshades may also do the trick.

Temperature

65° F is the ideal temperature for sleeping. A warm room or too many blankets can interrupt your sleep.

Source: Power Sleep by Dr. James B. Maas

Dr. James B. Maas's Top 10 great sleep strategies.

Simple modifications to your daily routine are an effective way to help your body's sleep cycle regulate itself.

1. Reduce stress.
2. Exercise, but not within two hours of bedtime.
3. Keep mentally stimulated during the day.
4. Eat a proper diet.
5. Stop smoking
6. Reduce caffeine intake.
7. Avoid alcohol near bedtime.
8. Take a warm bath before bed.
9. Maintain a relaxing atmosphere in the bedroom.
10. Establish a bedtime ritual.

Source: Power Sleep by Dr. James B. Maas

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Five Tips for Safe Sleep

The bedroom is probably the single most important room in your home. You spend one-third of your life in it, and the time spent there is when you are at your most vulnerable-when you are asleep. Mattresses are the centerpiece of every bedroom in America. At Simmons we are continually improving fire-resistant mattresses; however mattress technology alone cannot guarantee fire safety. Some simple, commonsense precautions will always be needed to protect your family from fires, including those that start in the bedroom.

Although the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that smoking materials, cooking equipment, heating equipment and arson cause most residential fires, it's always a good idea to consider everything when looking for ways to make the home safe from fire-including the bedroom. Here are five tips for keeping mattresses and bedrooms safe from fire.

1. Smoke detectors really do save lives.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), in 62 percent of mattress-related fires occurring in homes, smoke alarms were either not present or not functioning.¹ Also, in 43 percent of the civilian fatalities resulting from mattress-related fires, the victims were asleep at the time.² Smoke detectors are critical to fire safety. A report by the USFA concludes that "having a working and properly placed smoke alarm is especially important in reducing mattress and bedding fires."¹ The USFA reports that "a working smoke alarm [in a home] would alert a majority of those who are asleep while the fire smolders, thereby saving numerous lives."¹ Make it a habit to check smoke detector batteries every six months. Let your children test smoke detectors so they'll be familiar with the sounds of the alarm.

2. Have an escape plan.

The USFA reports that "a significant number of injuries were attributed to attempting to control the fire (68 percent)" and that "one out of every seven people killed in mattress and bedding fires were attempting to control the fire at the time of death."³ Combine those numbers with reports suggesting that additional fatalities related to fire are caused while people try to escape, and it becomes clear that a simple, well-rehearsed plan is essential for getting family members out safely. A family fire escape plan should identify two exits in each room, usually a door and window that are kept clear of furniture or toys. Each family member should also know where to meet after exiting the house. For second floor rooms, a fire ladder may be needed to get safely to the ground. Families should periodically rehearse their fire escape plans so everyone knows what to do and when.

3. Start protecting your children when they're small.

Put infants and toddlers to sleep in fire-resistant sleepwear, instead of "day" clothes. When shopping for clothes for small children, look for items with flame-resistant labels or those made of less flammable fabrics. Avoid putting infants or toddlers to bed in loose fitting t-shirts or other clothing. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that loose fitting garments made with cotton catch fire easily and result in 200-300 burn injuries to children yearly.⁴

Garments that are not flame resistant should fit the child snugly, almost skin tight, and be tight fitting around wrists, ankles and the waist. A larger size purchased now to fit later is not snug.

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4. Be careful with fire-even if you're an adult.

At an early age, teach young children that fire is not a toy. Remember that your kids look to you to set the example, so make sure they see you using fire carefully. Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children, ideally securing them in a locked location. As children get older, look under beds and in closets or other "secret" hiding places for burnt matches, lighters or other signs your kids may be playing with fire. Children may know they shouldn't play with fire and might hide matches or lighters in their bedrooms so they can play with them unobserved.

While adults don't think of themselves as "playing with fire," sometimes they can do things that are just as hazardous. Don't smoke in bed. As a source of mattress fire ignition, the USFA reports that cigarettes "were the leading form of heat in 26 percent of mattress and bedding fires."⁵ In a March 2002 report, USFA concluded that children playing with fire (25 percent) and adults smoking cigarettes in bed (25 percent) combine to cause about half of all mattress fires.⁶

In addition, remember to extinguish all burning candles before going to sleep or exiting the room.

5. Use care with appliances.

A USFA fact sheet on bedroom fire safety states that "most electrical fires in homes start in the bedroom."⁷ With more electricity used for heating, lighting and appliances in cold weather, take extra precautions during winter months. Ensure that you use only approved electric blankets and warmers with cords that aren't frayed. Bedding, curtains and clothing should always be at least three feet from portable heaters. Don't let electrical cords get caught between mattresses and walls where they can heat up bedding.

Fire prevention will always be an important part of maintaining a safe and happy home. While nothing will ever completely remove the threat of fire, taking a few simple precautions will go a long way in helping you and your family sleep safely.

¹ U.S. Fire Administration. Topical Fire Research Series. Volume 2, Issue 17, March 2002: page 3.

² U.S. Fire Administration. Topical Fire Research Series. Volume 2, Issue 17, March 2002: page 3, figure 5.

³ U.S. Fire Administration. Topical Fire Research Series. Volume 2, Issue 17, March 2002: page 3, figure 5.

⁴ Consumer Product Safety Commission. Document #5075 -

Guidelines for Buying Children's Sleepwear.

⁵ U.S. Fire Administration. Topical Fire Research Series. Volume 2, Issue 17, March 2002: page 3, figure 5.

⁶ U.S. Fire Administration. Topical Fire Research Series. Volume 2, Issue 17, March 2002: page 3, figure 5.

⁷ U.S. Fire Administration. Bedroom Fire Safety Helps You Sleep Sound at Night. March 1999.