

Lifestyle tips for better sleep patterns

Managing narcolepsy often takes more than just medicine. These tips may help during the day and at night.

Managing narcolepsy is a challenge, but there are things you can do. Lifestyle changes may make a difference to your sleep quality.



A nap is not a luxury for me. It's part of my treatment.

- Katie O., living with narcolepsy





Strive for consistent sleep and wake times

Try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This may help train your body and brain to sleep at the best times for your schedule.



Try to create optimal conditions for sleep

Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and a cool comfortable temperature (60°F to 67°F is recommended). Turn off screens an hour before bed. Light (especially the blue light on computer and phone screens) can prevent the brain from releasing melatonin—a key driver of sleepiness at night.



Honor the nap

If you have something important to attend to, make sure you're as fresh as possible by scheduling a short nap prior. Don't feel bad about asking your employer, family, and friends for accommodations for napping—it could benefit them too.



Think about your food and drink consumption

Try not to eat or drink before bed, especially caffeinated beverages or alcohol. The effects of caffeine may last for many hours, so caffeinated drinks even in the middle of the day may still be in your system and make it harder to fall asleep at night. Alcohol is a sedative, which means it slows down some of your body's processes; however, being sedated isn't the same as being asleep. It doesn't allow for deep sleep and all of the benefits that come along with it.



Stay active!

Exercise during the day can make your body feel a greater need for sleep at night. Not only is exercise helpful for restful sleep, it's also good for your general, physical, and mental health. Try not to exercise too late in the evening or too close to bedtime, as this can actually make your body feel more awake.

Note: Sleep tips are based on information from the Sleep Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.