Sleep Hygiene
for Adults

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS DURING CONCUSSION RECOVERY

Overnight sleep is essential to concussion recovery. Sleep problems are one of the strongest predictors of lingering symptoms, so make quality sleep a nightly priority.[1]

7–8 hours	30–60 min	3–4 hours
of overnight sleep	screen-free before bed	caffeine-free before bed

Your Nightly Plan

1. **Keep a consistent schedule.** Same bedtime and wake time every day, weekends included. Improvement takes a few days.
2. **Aim for 7–8 hours of overnight sleep.** If you struggle to sleep at night, limit time in bed to about 7 hours.
3. **Avoid daytime naps.** Naps reduce the sleep drive you need to fall asleep at night.
4. **Follow the same bedtime routine** like a warm shower, meditation, or light reading.
5. **Power down screens** 30–60 minutes before bed.
6. **Awake in bed for 30 minutes?** Get up and do something relaxing without a screen (not work or chores) for 10–15 minutes until drowsy, then return to bed.

Helpful Habits

- Keep the bedroom **cool, quiet, and dark.**
- **Use your bed only for sleep,** not for TV, phones, or work.
- **Limit caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol** near bedtime. Alcohol disrupts sleep later in the night.
- **Stay active** as cleared by your concussion team, saving vigorous exercise for earlier in the day.
- Avoid **large meals** close to bedtime.
- Get **bright morning light.** It helps reset sleep timing and daytime alertness after concussion.[3]
- Try **deep breathing** or progressive muscle relaxation before bed.

If sleep problems continue

Melatonin: consider 3–6 mg (over the counter). Take it after dinner for trouble falling asleep, or at bedtime for trouble staying asleep.

Magnesium may modestly improve sleep.[4] Keep supplements to 350 mg a day or less, and skip it if you have kidney disease.

Still struggling?

Ask about CBT-I, a non-medication therapy shown to reduce insomnia after concussion.[2] Some medications can also cause sleeplessness, so review yours with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any supplement.

1. Concussion Recovery Study (CREST). *PLOS One.* 2026. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0339248 2. Malarkey ME, et al. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2024;7(7):e2420090. 3. Killgore WDS, et al. *Neurobiol Dis.* 2020;134:104679. 4. Schuster J, et al. *Nat Sci Sleep.* 2025;17:2027–2040.

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