

Light, Sleep & Circadian Rhythm — Practical Daily Reference Chart

Supporting biological timing, energy regulation, and restorative sleep

Daily Light & Circadian Rhythm Support

| Time of Day | What to Do | Why It Matters to the Body |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Morning (First 30–60 minutes after waking) | Get natural light exposure outdoors or near a window | Signals the start of the biological day; supports cortisol timing, alertness, and daily rhythm coordination |
| Morning Activity Period | Move your body (walk, stretch, light activity) in natural light if possible | Reinforces wake signals; supports circulation, metabolism, and cognitive function |
| Midday (Peak Light Hours) | Spend time outdoors or in bright environments | Maintains alertness; supports stable energy and ongoing circadian alignment |
| Afternoon | Continue light exposure; avoid dim indoor environments for long periods | Helps prevent early fatigue and supports sustained biological timing |
| Evening (2–3 hours before bed) | Begin reducing light intensity; shift to softer, warmer lighting | Signals transition toward rest; supports melatonin production timing |
| Night (1 hour before bed) | Limit bright screens and overhead lighting | Reduces interference with sleep signals and biological night timing |
| Sleep Environment | Keep room dark or low light during sleep | Supports deeper sleep and stable circadian rhythm overnight |

Light Exposure Guidelines

| Condition | Practical Support | Why It Matters |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Limited Daylight Exposure | Increase outdoor time daily (even 10–20 minutes) | Strengthens circadian signals and supports mood, energy, and timing |
| Indoor Work Environments | Sit near windows; take short outdoor breaks | Compensates for lower indoor light intensity |
| Seasonal Low Light (Fall/Winter) | Prioritize morning light; maintain consistent schedule | Helps stabilize mood and energy during reduced daylight periods |
| Excess Evening Light | Dim lights; reduce screen brightness | Supports natural transition to sleep readiness |

Sleep Rhythm Support

| Time / Phase | What to Do | Why It Matters to the Body |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wake Time (Daily Anchor) | Wake at a consistent time each day, including weekends | Sets the body's internal clock and stabilizes circadian rhythm |
| Morning Transition | Get light exposure and begin activity within the first hour | Reinforces wake signals and supports full daytime activation |
| Daytime Behavior | Stay active; avoid long daytime naps | Builds sleep pressure for easier nighttime sleep onset |
| Afternoon Reset (if needed) | Short rest (10–20 minutes max), not late in the day | Prevents disruption of nighttime sleep timing |
| Evening Wind-Down (1–2 hours before bed) | Reduce stimulation; create a consistent routine | Signals the body to transition toward rest |
| Bedtime (Consistent Window) | Go to bed at a similar time each night | Supports predictable sleep onset and rhythm stability |
| During the Night | Maintain a dark, quiet, cool environment | Supports uninterrupted sleep cycles and recovery processes |

Sleep Environment Guidelines

| Condition | Practical Support | Why It Matters |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Light | Keep room dark or use blackout curtains if needed | Prevents disruption of melatonin and sleep cycles |
| Temperature | Maintain a slightly cooler environment | Supports natural drop in body temperature for sleep |
| Noise | Reduce or buffer disruptive sounds | Helps maintain deeper, continuous sleep |
| Air Quality | Allow airflow or ventilation when possible | Supports respiratory comfort and overall sleep quality |
| Consistency | Use the space primarily for sleep | Reinforces the body's association with rest |

Signs Sleep & Rhythm May Need Support

| Pattern | What It May Reflect |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Difficulty falling asleep consistently | Disrupted evening light exposure or inconsistent timing |
| Waking frequently during the night | Environmental disruption or irregular rhythm patterns |
| Low energy during the day | Insufficient light exposure or poor sleep quality |
| Feeling alert late at night | Delayed circadian timing |
| Difficulty waking in the morning | Weak or inconsistent morning signals |
| Seasonal changes in mood or sleep | Reduced natural light exposure |

Simple Daily Rhythm Example

- **Morning:** wake at consistent time + natural light + movement
- **Midday:** bright light + activity + nourishment
- **Afternoon:** maintain engagement and light exposure
- **Evening:** dim lights + reduce stimulation + wind-down routine
- **Night:** dark, quiet, cool sleep environment

Key Takeaway

Light and sleep work together as a coordinated system.

Consistent daily patterns—bright light during the day, reduced light in the evening, and regular sleep timing—help support stable energy, clear biological rhythm, and restorative sleep over time.