

## Sleep Questioner

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 1. Do you lie in bed for hours, even when you aren't asleep?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 2. Do you read in bed?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 3. Do you watch television in bed?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 4. Do you eat, talk on the phone, or do other activities in bed?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 5. Do you engage in stimulating activities before bedtime?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 6. Do you watch the clock at night?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 7. Do you consume large quantities of caffeine, or consume any within twelve hours of bedtime?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 8. Do you smoke, either during the day or at night?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 9. Do you exercise within four hours of bedtime?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 10. Do you keep bright lights on until it's time for bed?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 11. Do you drink alcohol to help you sleep?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 12. Does your bedtime or wake up time often vary by more than an hour?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 13. Do you spend more time in bed on the weekends?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no 14. Is your sleeping environment uncomfortable in any way?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you need to improve certain aspects of your sleep hygiene. Let's look at each question in detail. If you answered yes to question 1, you're conditioning yourself to associate your bed with wakefulness, which will make it difficult for you to sleep well! If you answered no, you're on the right track to breaking any associations you may have with your bed being a place where you don't sleep well. If you answered yes to question 2, 3, or 4, you're engaging in stimulating activities while in bed. Please remember that the bed is for sleep and sex only. Watching television, reading books, talking on the phone, and other stimulating activities should take place in another room. If you answered no, you're on

the right track with eliminating stimulating activities in bed. If you answered yes to question 5, you need to try to relax before bedtime. This is very important in setting the stage for a restful night's sleep. If you answered no, then good job on realizing the importance of relaxation as part of your bedtime routine. If you answered yes to question 6, remember this: Every time you look at the clock, you're just reminding yourself that you're still awake! This is likely to increase your anxiety and frustration, and that isn't restful. If you answered no, you probably already know how watching the clock can increase your anxiety about not sleeping. If you answered yes to question 7, you're consuming too much caffeine, or your caffeine consumption occurs too close to bedtime. Some people are sensitive to the effects of caffeine for up to twelve hours, so experiment with avoiding caffeine for at least twelve hours before bedtime . If you answered no, continue to monitor your caffeine consumption and keep up the good work! If you answered yes to question 8, you're decreasing your chances of getting a good night's sleep. Nicotine is a stimulant and can keep you awake. At a bare minimum, try to decrease the amount you smoke during the day, and especially at night. If possible, don't smoke for an hour before bedtime. If you answered no, then good job! If you answered yes to question 9, you're exercising too late in the evening. The optimal time to exercise is four to five hours before bedtime. If that doesn't work with your schedule, then exercising even earlier in the day is better than exercising too close to bedtime. If you answered no , then you aren't disrupting your sleep by exercising too late in the evening. If you answered yes to question 10, you're upsetting your circadian rhythm by stimulating your brain with light, which makes it harder for your body to realize that it's dark outside and time to sleep. If you answered no, then continue to dim the lights at night as a way of helping your body prepare itself for sleep. If you answered yes to question 11, you're making the mistake of using alcohol in an attempt to put yourself to sleep. Remember, although alcohol can make you feel sleepy initially, later in the night it disrupts your sleep and can actually cause you to wake up more often. If you answered no, you probably already know that alcohol isn't the answer to sleepless nights. If you answered yes to question 12 or 13, your erratic sleep schedule could be contributing to your sleep problem. Try going to bed at the same time every night and getting up at the same time each morning, even on weekends. If you answered no, you're probably already aware of the importance of a consistent sleep-wake schedule. If you answered yes to question 14, consider what changes you can make in your bedroom to improve your sleep environment. If you see street lights shining into your bedroom from outside, try using darker curtains or shades. If noise is an issue, you may want to experiment with earplugs or a white noise machine. The temperature in your room should also be comfortable for sleeping. If you answered no, then your sleeping environment is dark, quiet, and comfortable. You must already know how important it is to have a sleeping environment that helps promote sleep.

List your top five favorite relaxing activities here:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do the activities you listed help you relax both physically and mentally? Some activities help with just one or the other, and that's okay too, depending on the situation. Hopefully you've listed some that help physically and some that help mentally, so that you can choose a relaxing activity that's most appropriate to your situation at the time. Relaxing Activities Checklist Now that you've come up with some ideas on your own, let's explore other relaxing activities you might not have mentioned. Any of the activities listed below can help you relieve some stress in your life.

Check off any of the following tension busters that appeal to you:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Taking a bath
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reading a book
- \_\_\_\_\_ Riding a bike
- \_\_\_\_\_ Going for a walk
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening to music
- \_\_\_\_\_ Watching television
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing in your journal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing a board game with family or friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting a manicure or pedicure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting a massage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing golf
- \_\_\_\_\_ Swimming
- \_\_\_\_\_ Knitting or sewing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gardening
- \_\_\_\_\_ Watching a movie

- \_\_\_\_\_ Going to the theater for a play, concert, or other performance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Going out to dinner with friends or family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doing yoga
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meditating
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doing deep breathing exercises
- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing with your pet
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doing beading, ceramics, pottery, or other crafts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Going to a park or the beach, or just being in nature

As you can see, this list could go on and on. Not all of these activities will be relaxing for everyone; for example, playing golf can be frustrating or stressful for some people, but relaxing for others. However, there are many to choose from, so experiment to find what works best for you and then incorporate those relaxing activities into your daily routine. It's good to have a variety of ways of relaxing that work well for you, because every day is different and some days you may need to do something different to relax. When you're engaged in these activities, try to really focus on what you're doing at the time and let go of some of the stress you may carry around with you. If you do an activity one day that's mentally relaxing but requires you to do physical exercise, try a different activity another day that allows you to relax physically, as well. Making time for a relaxing activity every day may seem unrealistic to you at first, but once you start incorporating relaxation into your daily lifestyle, you'll begin to wonder how you ever managed without it!