

How Alcohol Affects Your Sleep: Tips for Better Rest

While alcohol may help you fall asleep initially, it activates the sympathetic nervous system, preventing your body from fully relaxing and hindering muscle repair, hormone regulation, and overall recovery. This makes it harder for the body to recharge and repair effectively during the night.

Key Points to Remember

Even Small Amounts of Alcohol Can Impact Sleep:

- Consuming less than one drink can decrease your body's ability to recover by 9.3%.
- Consuming two or more drinks can decrease your body's ability to recover by 24–39%.



Alcohol Increases Your Heart Rate:

- After drinking alcohol, your heart rate increases, and your body works harder to maintain balance. With higher alcohol intake, your heart rate can rise by up to 8 beats per minute during sleep, making it more difficult for your body to rest properly.

Alcohol Affects Your Body's Ability to Relax:

- Alcohol reduces the activity of your parasympathetic nervous system, which helps your body relax and recover during sleep. As a result, your sympathetic nervous system (the "fight or flight" response) remains active, keeping your body on alert even while you sleep.

Youth and Activity Don't Offer Protection:

- You might assume that being young or physically active will shield you from alcohol's impact on sleep, but that's not the case! Even for those who exercise regularly, alcohol interferes with the body's recovery process.

Falling Asleep Quickly Doesn't Equal Quality Sleep:

- While alcohol may make you feel sleepy and help you fall asleep faster, it negatively impacts sleep quality, leaving you feeling tired and unrested the next day.



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Practical Tips for Better Sleep

1

Limit Alcohol Intake Before Bed:

Finish drinking at least 3 hours before bed to give your body time to metabolize the alcohol.

2

Stay Hydrated:

Alcohol can dehydrate you and disrupt sleep. Drink water with alcohol to stay hydrated and improve sleep quality.

3

Create A Relaxing Bedtime Routine:

Focus on winding down naturally before bed with calming activities, such as reading, stretching, or meditation, to help offset the stimulating effects of alcohol.

4

Prioritize Sleep Hygiene:

Make sure your bedroom is conducive to restful sleep with a cool, dark, and quiet environment, as alcohol can sometimes cause disruptions like waking up in the middle of the night.



Alternatives

Here are some great alternatives to help you relax without disrupting your rest:

Herbal Teas: Chamomile, Peppermint, Lavender, Valerian Root



Kombucha: This fermented tea provides a slightly fizzy and tangy flavor similar to alcohol but without the negative sleep effects. Just be sure to choose one low in caffeine (and low in added sugar) if you're having it in the evening.

Tart Cherry Juice: Drinking a small amount before bed may enhance sleep quality naturally.



Golden Milk (Turmeric Latte): Warming spices like turmeric and ginger may promote relaxation and have anti-inflammatory benefits, making them a great nighttime option.