

5 Tips to Help Your Teen Sleep Better

(EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT READY TO CHANGE ANYTHING YET)

If your teen does not view sleep as a problem or as something they are ready to change, it's often best to avoid a power struggle. Instead, invest your time and energy on these 'behind-the-scenes' steps and arm yourself with advice and resources you can share once they are open and ready for more.

For more, scan this code to listen to the [DECODE Project Podcast episode](#) (21:26) that accompanies this guide.



For more resources, visit decodeinsomnia.com/parents

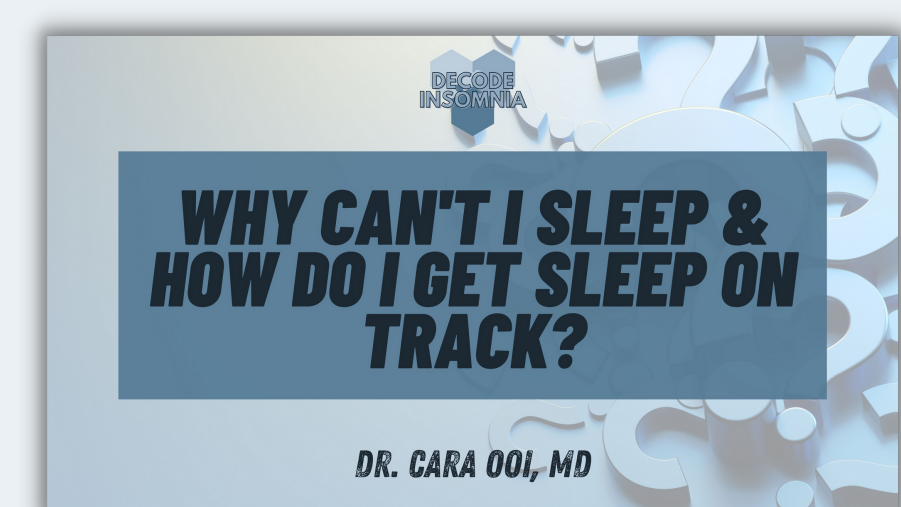
Allow a later bedtime to better match your teen's potential for sleep

While delaying bedtime seems counterintuitive, it can be harmful to get into bed too early. Attempting sleep too early sets your teen up for frustration, anxiety, and insomnia. In addition, time spent awake in bed fuels an unhelpful association in which the bed is paired with a state of alertness, tension, and anxiety.

In the teen years, it is normal for the body clock to run later. Napping, sleeping in, and not getting enough physical activity can also impact when sleep can be expected.

Learn more here:

- [Why Can't I Sleep & How Do I Get Sleep on Track?](#)



WHEN YOUR TEEN IS READY...

- Share the concept of timezones, the forbidden zone, showing up too early for sleep, and the 14 hour rule
- Share [Why Can't I Sleep & How Do I Get Sleep on Track?](#)



Help your teen reduce time awake in bed

Time awake in bed strengthens an unhelpful association with the bed. To make it more likely that your teen will spend less time awake in bed, set up an alternate comfortable spot (a cozy nook) for daytime activities as well as for when they can't sleep. So that they will realistically use it, make it easy to access and as comfortable as possible.

Learn more here:

- [How to Set up a Cozy Nook](#)

WHEN YOUR TEEN IS READY...

- Share [How to Set Up a Cozy Nook](#) & [How to Set Up a Sleep Kit](#)
- Print the [checklist](#)
- Help your teen brainstorm, gather, and purchase items for a sleep kit so that it is easier to avoid defaulting to devices when they can't sleep
- Make it a fun project to work on together



5 Tips to Help Your Teen Sleep Better (Updated April 2023)



Optimize the timing of light and dark cues in the home

Too much light in the 3 hours before bedtime and overnight impacts your teen's ability to get sleepy, worsens sleep quality, and can delay the body clock. It's good practice to start reducing light 3 hours before bedtime, becoming more mindful of light as bedtime approaches. Blackout conditions overnight are ideal.

Morning light signals the beginning of the day and prevents the body clock from drifting onto a later schedule. Daytime light boosts mood and alertness. Take a look at the [How to Optimize Light](#) for more suggestions.

TO REDUCE EVENING AND OVERNIGHT LIGHT

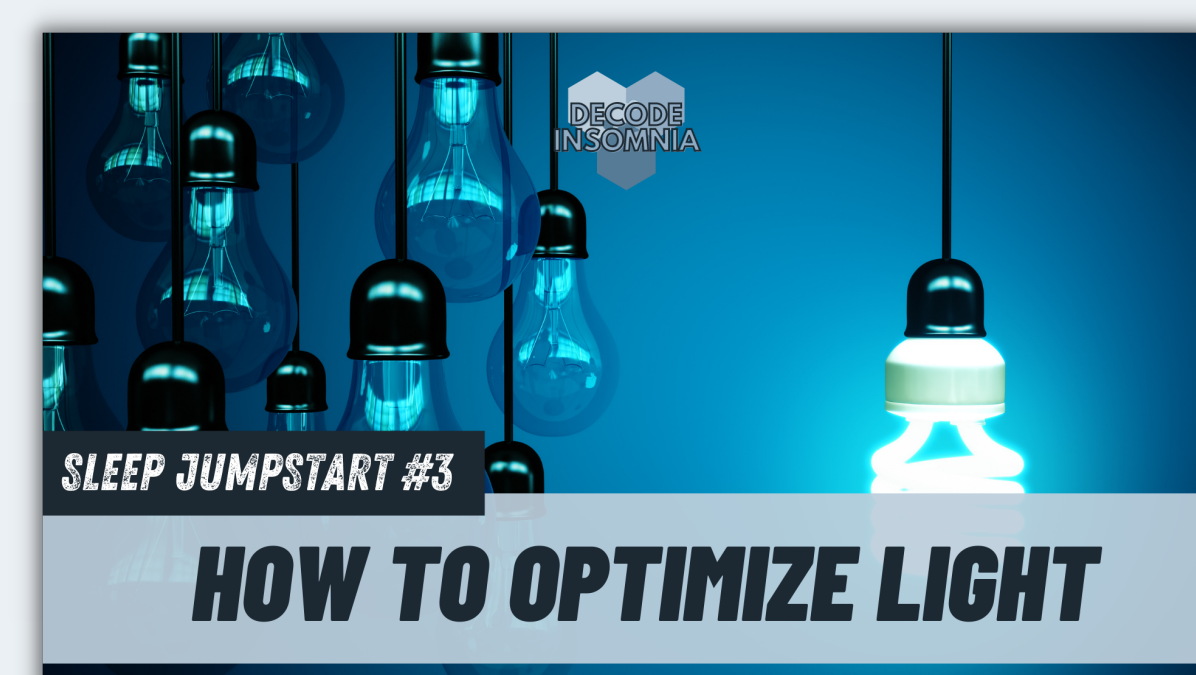
- Set an alarm as a reminder to reduce light 3 hours before bedtime
- 3 hours before bedtime: Dim and turn off unnecessary lighting, turn off bright white LEDs, switch from overhead lighting to dimmer task lighting, reduce the TV brightness and backlighting
- Place dim nightlights in hallways and bathrooms to avoid turning on bright lights overnight

TO INCREASE MORNING LIGHT

- If this will not cause conflict, open the blinds and let natural sunlight into your teen's room in the morning (this helps even if their eyes remain closed!)
- Set up a comfortable space with bright lighting to help your teen avoid dim conditions in the morning and during the day

WHEN YOUR TEEN IS READY...

- Share [How to Optimize Light](#)
- Install blue-light filters on all devices
- Create blackout conditions overnight
- Suggest screens that are further away in the evening
- Suggest the use of an amber tinted reading light and amber-tinted blue light blocking glasses in the evening
- Encourage bright outdoor light in the morning



5 Tips to Help Your Teen Sleep Better (Updated April 2023)

Find fun ways to help your teen reduce naps and wake up at a more consistent time

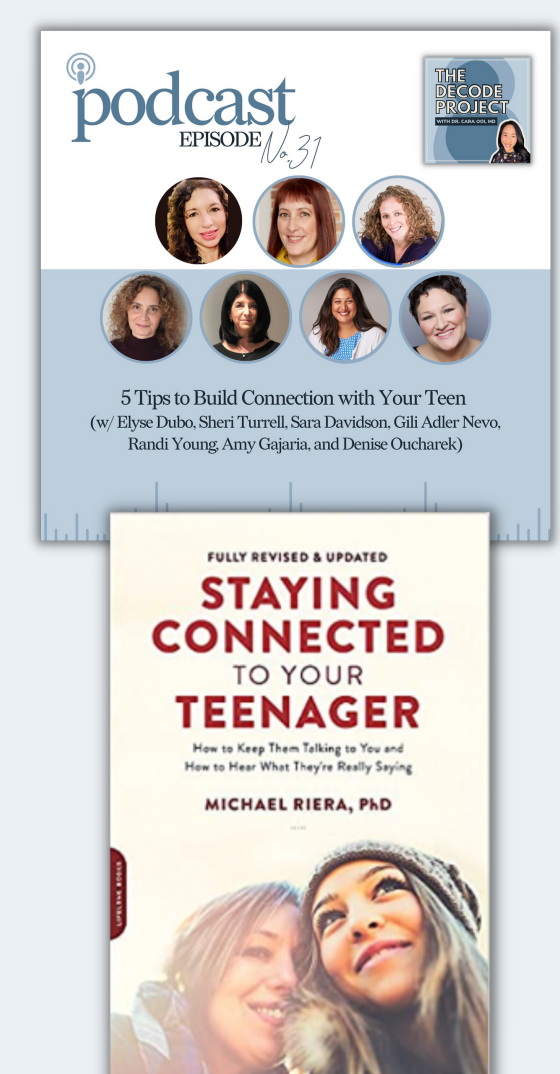
Waking up at a more consistent time can be a game-changer but forcing your teen to wake up can lead to an unhelpful battle. Instead, bypass this battle by planting treats (ex. a breakfast they love) and by scheduling fun activities. Naps can make it harder to fall asleep and to have a good quality sleep. Help your teen schedule fun activities and avoid low stimulating environments at times high-risk times for naps.

WHEN YOUR TEEN IS READY...

- Help them brainstorm and plan activities ex. a Saturday morning movie date, yoga class with a friend, going to the gym after school

Invest in connection

- Listen to [DECODE Project Podcast Episode #31: How to Stay Connected to Your Teen](#) (Lessons Learned from the First 30 Episodes of the Podcast) (37:37)
- Read [Staying Connected to Your Teenager](#) by Michael Riera



Bonus Tips:

- [Model](#) instead of giving advice directly
- [Learn communication strategies](#) to help your teen move towards change
- Learn how to [effectively communicate your concerns](#) if your teen is not ready for change
- Learn strategies to [avoid bedtime and electronics battles](#)

