



## Optimal Sleep Environment

Many of us take for granted that we can sleep any time or anywhere. Many of us think that leaving lights or noise on while we are asleep, makes our sleep better but we are wrong. Even while we are asleep our brain picks up changes in light even through our closed eyes, we hear changes in background sounds, and we sense changes in temperature. In a normal sleep cycle we have a pattern that has a light awakening or lighter sleep after every episode of deep sleep so we can monitor our environment even while asleep. During this lighter sleep, these stimulants of light, temperature, and sound may cause more awakenings and sleep fragmentation. Many people use a “sound machine” at night to “sleep better”. A sound machine may drone and give a monotonous background to block out other acute sounds that would otherwise awaken us.

### **The optimal sleep environment is:**

**68-69 degrees fahrenheit**

**No sound**

**No light, complete darkness**

**No movement of bed**

**No intrusions to sleep room**

Sometimes we need to improve our sleep environment. We recommend:

No night light, use blackout shades or sleep masks that keep all light out of your eyes.

A silent sleep environment or earplugs or consider a sound machine

Thermostat set to 69 degrees Fahrenheit during sleep

No interruption from bed partner, pets, or electronic devices

Set cell phone to “Privacy” or Do Not Disturb” mode or turn off during sleep hours, relocate phone out of bedroom

If you awaken, don’t look at the clock or phone. If you need to go to the bathroom, do so in minimal light.

Awaken when you can not sleep any longer or with alarm after 7 or more hours of sleep.