

**September eNewsletter Excerpt**  
**#LifeisGood**  
**by Dr. Brenda Boatswain**

**What is Sleep Hygiene?**

Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe sleep habits. Good sleep hygiene results in a better night's sleep. Good Sleep hygiene involves:

- Going to bed at the same time each night and rising at the same time each morning.
- Avoid large meals before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime.
- Avoid nicotine.
- If you can't fall asleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired, and then return to bed.
- Use your bed for sleep and sex only. This avoids associating your bed and bed time with stressful activities. That includes no work or electronics in bed!!

**Other Lifestyle Practices that Contribute to Good Sleep\***

**Relaxation Techniques**

When you are relaxed you can have more restful sleep. The stresses and pressures of daily living can result in sleep disorders and problems. The good news is there are a number of relaxation techniques you can use to help release tension and anxiety from daily life. Try deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery to reduce stress.

**Biofeedback**

Biofeedback is a way to use your thoughts to control your bodily reactions to stress. With proper training and practice, you can slow your breathing and heart rate, relax your muscles, and reduce the negative effects of stress and tension.

**Exercise**

When you exercise, your body releases endorphins, which are natural chemicals that enhance mood and relaxes your body. Exercise helps to clear your mind and put life's issues in perspective. Research has shown that exercise is especially useful if you suffer from depression and anxiety.

## **Yoga**

Yoga uses movement and breathing exercises and can calm the mind.

## **Massage**

Massage is another way to relax both your body and your mind. Massage can be both calming and energizing. There are different massage techniques so be sure to discuss your choices with a professionally trained massage therapist to ensure you select the most beneficial option.

## **Meditation**

Meditation is practiced in just about every religion and thus has been used for thousands of years. It calms the body and mind, and reenergizes the spirit. It can be helpful towards a good night's sleep.

## **Music**

Music affects brainwaves, heartbeat, and respiration. Slow tempo music can lower heart rate and blood pressure, and a fast tempo can energize. Music can be a mood booster and can be helpful in reducing tension.

\* So choose one of these lifestyle practices and invest some time and practice to see which method works best for you.

\*Seek counsel on relaxation techniques. See information below on an upcoming workshop.

Sources:

<http://www.bettersleepbetterlife.com/relaxationtechniques.html#sthash.F8Y2Nr6F.dpuf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssleep/>