Getting More Sleep

1. **Develop good sleep hygiene**. If you're getting "bad sleep" (a mixture of lying awake in bed and actual sleep) then you have no way of knowing how much sleep you're actually getting, so you can't figure out how much sleep you need. To carry out this test, you're going to need at least decent quality sleep (falling asleep soon after you go to bed, and not waking up a lot through the night)
   1. Don't eat or exercise in the last few hours before you go to bed.
   2. Don't drink much in the hour before you sleep, and use the bathroom right before you go to bed. This reduces the likelihood of waking up to use the toilet.
   3. Don't get in the habit of reading, watching TV, listening to music, or doing anything that engages your mind when you're in bed.
   4. Learn how to clear your mind. See [How to Meditate](http://www.wikihow.com/Meditate).
   5. Abstain from alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes, and medicines that can affect your sleep. Continue abstaining from the use of these products for the duration of the test. (Consult your doctor before abstaining from prescribed medicines.)
   6. Avoid taking naps.
2. 2

**Stick to a consistent bed time or wake-up time, but not both**. Which one you choose will depend on your individual circumstances and schedule. Follow one of these tests for 2 weeks:

* + Test 1: Wake up at the same time in the morning, every day of the week. The time you choose doesn't really matter, as long as it's not likely you'll get woken up earlier. For example, if you choose 8am, but you know that on Fridays your roommate makes a lot of noise at 7am and it tends to wake you up, set the time at 7 instead. It's just for the length of this experiment, not for the rest of your life. Set your alarm clock and force yourself to get out of bed as soon as the alarm clock goes off (read the tips in [How to Stop Hitting the Snooze Button](http://www.wikihow.com/Stop-Hitting-the-Snooze-Button)).  
      
    Go to bed each night whenever you feel tired. Don't stay up if you feel sleepy. Don't go to bed if you're not sleepy. After two weeks your body will know that it has to get up at a specific time (say, 6am) so you will begin to *consistently* start feeling tired at midnight, which will tell you that your body needs 6 hours of sleep.
  + Test 2: Choose a time to go to bed that will allow you up to 9 hours (or 10, if you can manage it!) of *uninterrupted* sleep before you need to wake up. It also needs to be a time when you will easily fall asleep; if you're not tired or sleepy and you end up laying in bed without sleeping, this test won't work.  
      
    For this test, do not use an alarm clock. If you need to wake up at 9am so you can make it to work, go to bed every night at 11pm (which gives you 10 hours to sleep) to ensure that you wake up naturally by 9am. If you're worried you might sleep more than 10 hours, set an "emergency" alarm at 9:15, or do the other test instead.  
      
    As the test goes on, you'll notice that you start waking up on your own at the same time every day. Let's say you go to sleep every night at 12am, and you find yourself waking up feeling rested every morning at 8am. That means you need 8 hours of sleep. # Listen to your body. You may discover you need anywhere between 3 and 12 hours of sleep. If you sleep that much (or little) and you feel fine, don't let anyone tell you otherwise. There's no evidence for the recommended 8 hours of sleep a night.[[2]](http://www.wikihow.com/Know-How-Much-Sleep-You-Need#_note-time-1) Some people who need less sleep feel pressured to sleep for longer, because everyone tells them they should be getting more sleep in order to be healthy, and their worrying leads to insomnia![[](http://www.wikihow.com/Know-How-Much-Sleep-You-Need#_note-time-1)