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LIFESTYLE

# How to Beat Holiday Sleep Challenges

📌 [Holidays](#), [Lifestyle](#)

Between holiday parties, extended family get-togethers, and endless shopping and chores to complete, you may barely have a moment to catch your breath. So it's hardly surprising that you may not be getting your best sleep at this time of year.

For one thing, holiday events can throw your family's sleep routines off course. For another, the excitement can ratchet up your kids' energy, and your heightened level of busyness can leave you feeling frayed at the seams. It's up to you, as a parent, to decide how flexible to be about your kids' bedtimes but a modicum of consistency goes a long way toward sound sleep for everyone. Here are four good ways to beat holiday sleep challenges:

**Maintain your normal sleep schedule.** Sure, there will be a few late nights, but try to go to bed and wake up at the same time, day after day, as much as you can. This will support your body's inherent sleep-wake cycle and set you up for better quality shuteye when bedtime comes around. If you

attend a late-night party, try to wake up within an hour of your usual time the next day, even if you're tired. Sleeping in on weekends can backfire, leaving you with the equivalent of social jet lag. If you need a pick-me-up, take a well timed siesta in the afternoon.

**Avoid heavy evening meals.** Try to eat and drink lightly in the evening and avoid chowing down within two hours of bedtime. [Going to bed with a full stomach](#) is likely to lead to tossing and turning, as your body works to digest all that food. Similarly, while alcohol can make you sleepy initially, it can disrupt sleep and lead to awakenings as your body metabolizes it. If you're hungry before bed, have a light [bedtime snack](#) such as a glass of milk, which contains yawn-inducing tryptophan, and a handful of granola or a piece of fruit.

**Exercise in the late afternoon.** Besides reducing stress and tiring you out, an aerobic workout will raise your body temperature slightly. Once your temperature falls a few hours later, this will lead to sleepiness. Just be sure to avoid strenuous workouts within four hours of bedtime, since these may interfere with your ability to fall asleep.

**Take time to decompress.** An hour before bed, start winding down your activities so you can set yourself up for a good night's sleep. Think of this as your time to power down: Put aside your "to do" list(s), ditch the late-night chores, and focus on

relaxing your body and mind. Some good ways to do this: Take a warm bath, do some gentle stretching or deep-breathing exercises, practice meditation or visualization techniques, read a comforting book, or enjoy some soothing music. Think of this as a gift to yourself—after all, you deserve it!

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