

Cool Tips for Sleeping Through Summer

Connie Midey - *The Arizona Republic*
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Far ahead of today's sleep experts, English poet Rupert Brooke knew what restless sleepers needed to settle blissfully into dreamland.

"The cool kindness of sheets," he called it, and it's never so welcome as on a hot, muggy Valley night.

Even people who sleep peacefully the rest of the year can lose the knack in the summertime, says Lauri Leadley, president of the Valley Oximetry Sleep Disorders Center, which has locations in Phoenix and Mesa.

"It's mostly because your body temperature rises when it's hot outside," she says. "And in order for you to fall asleep, your core body temperature needs to drop. That's why we recommend keeping your bedroom and yourself cooler at bedtime."

Mesa dentist Bob Caseldine says that strategy helps his wife, Marsha. The couple have been evaluated at Valley Oximetry.

"My wife needs to sleep with a fan," he says. "I can't stand the fan."

Bob never has had trouble falling asleep, just sleeping soundly enough to wake rested. The couple, both 54, were diagnosed with sleep apnea about a year and a half ago but no longer spend every day in a daze.

Bob says sleep can still be elusive for Marsha, who also has restless leg syndrome.

"If it's the least bit warm, she can't fall asleep," Bob says. "She turns the temperature down. She works Sudoku puzzles."

If summer nights have the same adverse effect on you, try speeding your slumber with these tips from the National Sleep Foundation and Valley Oximetry:

- **Prevent heat buildup in yourself and your house during the day.** Limit hot-weather activities, drink lots of water and find shady spots when you're out. In your house, keep blinds and windows closed, and use fans to circulate cool air.
- **Allow time for your body to cool.** Try to complete exercise, chores and other physical activities several hours before bedtime. Your internal temperature needs to drop for you to fall, and stay, asleep.
- **Avoid hot, heavy meals.** Concentrate on fruits, vegetables and other cool, refreshing foods that rehydrate you.
- **Take a warm shower or bath before going to bed.** A cool shower sounds more logical, and it does feel good as it lowers the temperature of your skin. But it may not reduce your core body temperature the way a warm shower or bath does. Shower at least one hour before bedtime.
- **Use lightweight sleepwear.** Light cotton pajamas keep you from overheating. Cotton and other fabrics with wicking properties draw sweat away from your body and distribute it to the fabric's surface, where it can evaporate.
- **Choose the coolest room in the house for sleep.** That may not be your bedroom, but you'll sleep better in lower temperatures. Or cool your bedroom by keeping lights off, shades drawn and a fan circulating. Cool cotton sheets help, too.

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