

Temperature for the Best Sleep: FAQ

By Alice Lesch Kelly, WebMD Feature, Reviewed by Michael W. Smith, MD

You've followed every tip known for how to sleep better. Relaxing bedtime routine? Check. Dark room? Check. Complete quiet? Check. Then you get in bed and realize the temperature is causing you to toss and turn.

Here are answers to common questions about the best temp to snooze.

What's the best temperature for sleeping?

“The right temperature -- typically a bit on the cool side -- can help with sleep quality immensely,” says W. Christopher Winter, MD, director of the Charlottesville Neurology and Sleep Medicine Center in Virginia.

Sleep can be disrupted by temperatures anywhere below 65 or above 75. The sweet spot for great sleep is between 68 and 72 degrees. “That’s really optimal for sleep,” says Michael J. Breus, PhD, author of *Good Night: The Sleep Doctor's 4-Week Program to Better Sleep*.

For most people, heat interferes with sleep more than cold.

What can I do to sleep well when I can't control the temperature?

Coping with heat is tougher. Breus faces that problem on a regular basis. He lives in Arizona, where temperatures soar to 114 degrees and higher. “Even with air conditioning, trying to cool a house down to 75 degrees can be extraordinarily difficult,” he says.

Here are his tips for sleeping well in a warm room.

- Take a cool shower before bed.
- Keep a bottle of ice water on your nightstand. A few sips can cool you down.
- Place a cool, wet towel on your forehead. Heat tends to leave your body through your head, and a wet towel can speed up heat loss.
- Use a thin sheet, even if it's very warm. “Almost everyone needs some small bit of tactile sensation to help them relax,” Breus says.

Is the best sleep temperature different for different people?

Most people have a comfortable sleep-temperature range of several degrees. That range can vary from person to person. Your perfect sleep temperature may be too high or too low for someone else.

Your preferred temperature can also change as you get older. Aging thins the layer of fat just under your skin, which naturally insulates against heat and cold. Your best temperature range at age 50 may be narrower than it was at 30.

Health issues, such as the circulatory problem Raynaud's disease, can make you chilly.

What about a man's vs. a woman's sleep-temperature needs?

Men tend to have a steady body temperature, so one consistent sleep temperature tends to work well for them.

Women's body temperatures can vary based on their menstrual cycle. Once menopause begins, hot flashes and night sweats can leave a woman feeling too hot one minute and too cold the next.

SOURCES:

W. Christopher Winter, MD, director of the Charlottesville Neurology and Sleep Medicine Center, VA.

Michael J. Breus, PhD, clinical psychologist; diplomat, the American Board of Sleep Medicine; fellow, The American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

Judith Volkar, MD, OB/GYN, The Center for Specialized Women's Health at the Cleveland Clinic.

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http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/features/sleep-temperature?ecd=wnl_slw_071314&ctr=wnl-slw-071314_nsl-ld-stry&mb=tdqBiFFJL7DPXNZ2FHEaeHnVev1imbCy0%2f9rpkC37M%3d