

Noise Color Guide for Sleep

White · Pink · Brown — when to use each, volume tips, and a 7-night test

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What “noise color” means

Noise colors describe how energy is spread across sound frequencies. For sleep, people usually care about three: **white**, **pink**, and **brown** (sometimes called red). None of them is magic — they are steady backgrounds that can mask sudden sounds and give a restless mind something predictable to settle on.

Quick comparison

Color	Sounds like	Often best for
White	TV static, steady hiss	Masking sharp, high noises; some focus tasks
Pink	Steady rain, softer hiss	Sleep and relaxation for many people
Brown	Deep rumble, distant thunder, strong waterfall	Racing thoughts, low rumbles, heavier mask

White noise

Equal energy across audible frequencies. It can cover clicks, voices, and high street noise well, but some people find the hiss harsh at night.

Pink noise

More energy in lower frequencies than white, so it usually sounds softer. Common choice for sleep and wind-down.

Brown noise

Even more low-frequency emphasis. Deeper and darker. Many people with a busy mind prefer it for bedtime; research on “brown vs white for ADHD” is still limited — test both.

Volume and safety

- Keep it as low as possible while still masking the problem sound.
- Avoid loud noise machines next to a baby’s head; follow pediatric guidance on distance and level.
- If your ears feel tired or you need to raise the volume every week, turn it down or take a break.
- Headphones overnight are optional — prefer loose/comfortable designs and moderate volume.

7-night test plan

Use the same wake time, similar bedtime, and only change the noise type. Rate sleep quality 1–5 each morning.

Nights 1–2: White noise, low volume, 45–60 minutes or all night if you prefer.

Nights 3–4: Pink noise, same volume and timing.

Nights 5–6: Brown noise, same volume and timing.

Night 7: Winner of the week (or silence) and note which felt easiest.

Track: minutes to fall asleep (rough), night wakings, morning grogginess. Winner = the one you actually want to use again.

Where to try free mixes

On SleepWellSpace you can blend rain, ocean, brown noise, and fan in the free Sleep Sound Mixer:

<https://sleepwellspace.com/mix-tools/>

For bedtimes based on sleep cycles:

<https://sleepwellspace.com/sleep-calculator-find-your-best-bedtime-based-on-sleep-cycles/>

This guide is general information, not medical advice. Sleep problems that persist deserve professional care.

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