



Why is sleep so important?

Quality sleep improves your mental, emotional, and physical performance. It also improves your immune system, balances your hormones, boosts your metabolism, and improves your brain function. Sleep is when your brain files or removes all the clutter that accumulates in a day of learning and thinking so you are refreshed and ready with energy for the next day. Getting good sleep is important for both your mind and body.



How much sleep do I need?

Different people need a different amount of sleep in order to function optimally during the day. Whilst most adults need about 8 hours sleep a night, many teenagers need more like 9-10 hours sleep per night. Working out how much sleep you need will take a little time and perseverance. Record how you feel during the day based on how much sleep you had a night and a pattern will start to appear.

Top Tips for getting to sleep and sleep routine

1. Have a regular bed time and wake up time. A regular bed time helps to set your body clock so your body knows it's time to sleep. Waking up at (or near) the same time each day also helps your body to establish a sleep pattern. Get plenty of sunlight during the day too.
2. Establish a bed time ritual. Doing a series of actions before bed also helps your body to prepare for sleep. Ideas include, a warm bath or shower, reading a book, listening to quiet music or doing some gentle stretches.
3. Avoid technology in the hour before bed, including TV, computers and phones.
4. Exercise during the day so that your body is ready for rest at night.
5. Don't eat big meals at night. Eat as early as possible and try to avoid rich, heavy food too late.
6. Limit your caffeine during the day and don't drink any caffeine in the afternoon or evening.
7. Don't have too much liquid in the evening.
8. Worrying about problems at school or with friends often stops you from getting to sleep. Talk to a trusted person about things that are worrying you to find ways to solve your problems. You could also try some relaxation exercises such as meditation or positive visualisation.
9. Have your room as dark as possible when trying to get to sleep. Use a sleep mask if you need to avoid light e.g. from electronic devices, street lights etc.

Staying Asleep

- Make sure the temperature of your room is comfortable. Too cold and you may have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. Too warm and the heat will also wake you.
- Having a quiet environment will help you stay asleep. If loud noises often wake you, having some consistent "white noise" can be helpful. Earplugs may also work for some people.
- A comfortable bed which is large enough for you to spread out and is supportive will help you to sleep well, as will a comfortable pillow which provides support for your neck.
- Good ventilation in your room helps to get rid of toxins and keep the air you are breathing fresh. A potted plant in your room may help.
- Make sure you go to the toilet before bed.

Good quality sleep

- Smelling lavender while you sleep might improve the quality of your sleep. Try a few drops of lavender oil in your washing or on your pillow, or using lavender scented soap.
- Have a good sleep environment. Clear your room of clutter. Dust regularly. Have calming colours.
- Try rearranging your room according to Feng Shui principles, whereby you can see the door from your bed, but your bed is not directly facing the door.

Feeling refreshed after sleep

- First thing in the morning, drink a glass of water to help you wake up and rehydrate.
- Do some gentle stretches or more vigorous exercise first thing in the morning as part of your morning ritual. This will also help to set your body clock.
- Practice deep breathing while you are still in bed to make sure your body is able to take in lots of oxygen and expel carbon dioxide.

If you try out the tips here and are still having trouble with falling asleep or staying asleep, try talking to your doctor to see if there is a medical or other reason.

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