

Sleep

Hygiene

Information and tips for getting a good night's sleep

What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene refers to the environment you create in order to get a good night of sleep. This can include tasks you perform before bedtime, to how you physically sleep in the bed.

Why can't I sleep?

There are lots of reasons why we struggle to sleep. Here are some more common causes:

- feeling worried
- not being tired
- stress
- over-thinking

Not being able to sleep is normal, but it does not feel great and often impacts the rest of our lives. That is why it is important to try the tips in this booklet to try and get some rest!

Why do I need a good nights rest?

- Your mind and body heal and recharge whilst you sleep
- Helps to regulate emotions
- Improves immune system
- Helps prevent heart disease
- Improves concentration and productivity
- Prevents diabetes
- Improves memory
- Improves mental health
- It can help maintain a healthy weight

What can affect sleep

Sleep can be affected by many things, but the most common are things such as:

Diet

Drinking too much tea, coffee, cola and energy drinks can upset sleep. Eating large meals late at night can also keep you awake. Remember chocolate contains caffeine too!

Stress

having lots of schoolwork can put you under pressure and prevent sleep. You might find that when you are having friendship issues you struggle to sleep too.

Worries

If you are worried about something, then this can keep you awake at night. You may find yourself thinking about things you are worried about, which can prevent you from relaxing enough to fall to sleep.

What can affect sleep

Light

Your environment can affect sleep, try to make your room dark, cool and comfortable.

Noise

Loud sounds can disturb your sleep, preventing you getting to sleep or waking you up from sleep. Noises can increase your heartrate and even produce adrenaline that makes it even harder to get to sleep.

Medical conditions

There are various health problems that can affect sleep, it is important to maintain these with correct medication and medical advice in order to ensure they do not negatively affect your sleep.

How to improve sleep

There are lots of ways you can improve your sleep, such as:

Maintain a regular sleep schedule

Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time, even on weekends (which we know isn't easy!) Try your best to keep the difference in sleep and wake times within one hour.

Only use your bed for sleep

Try not to do homework, read, or listen to music in bed.

Cut out caffeine

Don't consume caffeine on a night, it is in things such as cola, coffee, tea and chocolate.

Follow a routine

Following the same routine each night can ensure your body is familiar with the pattern, and in turn find it easier to fall to sleep.

Create a peaceful place to sleep

The bedroom should be comfy, cool, quiet, and dark. A bedroom that is too warm can make it harder to fall asleep.

Top tips!

- Do some exercise in your daily routine a few hours before you go to bed – this helps you fall asleep more easily and even sleep more deeply!
- Keep your bedroom cool and dark. If it's too light a blackout blind or thick curtains may help.
- Avoid drinks tea, coffee and energy drinks, especially before bed!
- Turn off screens (TV, laptop, phones) an hour before bed to prevent sleep cycle disruptions
- Don't go to sleep on an empty stomach. Have a light snack before bed.
- Avoid long lie-ins at the weekend. Sticking to the same bed and wake-up time promotes better sleep.

How much sleep do I need?

Most of us need around eight hours of good-quality sleep a night to function properly – but some need more and some less.

What matters is that you find out how much sleep you need and then try to achieve it.

As a general rule, if you wake up tired and spend the day longing for a chance to have a nap, it's likely that you're not getting enough sleep.

Catching up on sleep

If you don't get enough sleep, there's only one way to compensate – getting more sleep.

It won't happen with a single early night. If you've had months of restricted sleep, you'll have built up a significant sleep debt, so expect recovery to take several weeks.

Starting on a weekend, try to add on an extra hour or two of sleep a night. The way to do this is to go to bed when you're tired, and allow your body to wake you in the morning (no alarm clocks allowed!).

Expect to sleep for upwards of 10 hours a night at first. After a while, the amount of time you sleep will gradually decrease to a normal level.

Don't rely on caffeine or energy drinks as a short-term pick-me-up. They may boost your energy and concentration temporarily, but can disrupt your sleep patterns even further in the long term.



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