

Sleep tips

Golden rules of Quality Sleep – good sleep helps boost our wellbeing. Sometimes we develop habits that impact our ability to fall asleep, or stay asleep. Here are some tips to help you (re)train your body ...

Be consistent – train your body to sleep by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day.

Develop your own sleep rituals to prepare your body for sleep, such as stretching, meditation, breathing, a warm shower, turning the lights down, pulling the curtains, drinking a cup of tea, etc.

Sleep when sleepy – go to bed when you feel tired, rather than falling asleep on the couch.

If you don't fall asleep within 30 minutes, get up and do something calm and boring with dimmed lights until you feel sleepy again. If you must use tech, dim the screen and reduce the noise. Try and avoid anything interesting or stimulating.

Mind your language - Prepare yourself for sleep rather than try to sleep. Trying to sleep and not succeeding can create a stress response and raise your cortisol levels, making it harder to go to sleep.

Caffeine, nicotine and alcohol can act as stimulants and disturb the quality of your sleep. For the 4-6 hours before bed, drink non-caffeinated drinks and be curious about how the alcohol impacts your ability to sleep or the quality of your sleep.

Foods and drinks with artificial additives and sugars may affect your mood, behaviour, attention, learning and sleep. Packet foods often contain additives and sugars that may impact your ability to sleep.

Bed is for sleeping – only use your bed for what it is intended for so your body associates it with sleep. If you watch TV, eat, read, or work on your laptop, your body may not learn this connection (or forget it).

Make sure your room is dark, and your bed is comfortable– turn your phone over, so there is no blue light. If you have a bright clock, turn it towards the wall or cover it. Are your pillows and mattress comfortable? Do you need an eye mask or earplugs...?

Avoid napping – if you must nap, keep it short, 20-45 minutes and nap before 3 pm.

Exercise – from the time we wake up until we sleep again, our body prepares for sleep. Regular exercise will help to ensure that we do not feel restless in the evening. Try not to do strenuous exercise close to bedtime as our body temperature needs to drop to help us sleep.

Turn off the tech an hour before bedtime.

General health – conditions such as allergies, hay fever, eczema, infections, asthma, obesity and pain can all impact your ability to fall or stay asleep. Your medication and the timing of them can affect your sleep too. Some people have sleep related conditions such as snoring or restless legs. It is important to talk to your doctor about your sleep if it interferes with your ability to go about what you want to, have to, or are expected to do.

Sunlight is essential for good sleep as it helps regulate the body clock.

If your mind is in overload, get up and do a brain dump for no more than about 20 minutes with some action points for the next day. When you feel sleepy again, go back to bed.