

## **Sleep Hygiene**

Sleep hygiene means doing things that improve the quality and quantity of sleep and reducing behaviours that can disrupt sleep. There is no ideal amount of sleep that suits everybody, but the amount of sleep we need in the night tends to reduce with age. It is more important to have a good quality sleep, rather than having lots of poor-quality sleep.

### **Stages of Sleep**

When we are asleep our bodies go through different stages of sleep. We move through different cycles and stages of sleep and each cycle can last around 90 minutes. It is normal for someone to usually have 4-5 cycles of the different stages of sleep each night.

There are four stages of sleep and a phase of rapid eye movement sleep (REM), which is when we dream. Stage 3 and 4 are the deepest stages of sleep and where we get our most refreshing sleep.

People who are woken frequently may have less Stage 3 and 4 sleep and may wake up feeling unrefreshed. Alcohol also decreases the amount of Stage 4 sleep, which is why we feel un-refreshed after drinking to excess.

If you are experiencing a poor quality of sleep at bedtime, there are a number of ways that you can help to promote a better quality of sleep. Improving your sleep may take some time but if you practice some or all the recommendations below you should expect to see some improvement over time.

### **Tips to promote good quality sleep: Keep a regular sleep routine**

Try to establish a regular routine by setting an alarm every day to wake you up in the mornings at the same time. It is important to try to go to bed at the same time every evening and go to bed when you start to feel sleepy and avoid staying up until you are feeling exhausted. The more irregular, the worse your sleep is likely to be. Your body will become accustomed to a regular routine and therefore it will then become easier to fall asleep.

### **Rest periods in the day**

Pacing your activities with regular rest breaks is important to avoid flare ups of pain. It is important to rest for short periods to break up your activities and avoid sleeping during the day to promote good sleep.

### **Daytime sleeping**

Sleeping in the day can lead to problems with feeling tired and falling asleep at night. If you normally sleep during the day, try to decrease the length of the sleep gradually. It can be helpful to use an alarm clock to limit your daytime sleeps. Limit daytime naps to half an hour as longer ones can have an impact on your quality of sleep at night.

### **Exercise**

Exercise during the day will help the body to feel more tired in preparation for a good sleep and getting out in the sun will help getting to sleep at night. It is important to try not to exercise vigorously for at least 1 hour before sleeping, since exercise will make you feel more awake.

### **Natural vs. 'blue' light**

It is important to get some natural daylight during each day and this will help your circadian sleep patterns. This could involve just stepping outside for some fresh air or going for a short walk.

Try to reduce the amount of artificial blue light before bedtime by avoiding using gadgets or watching the TV for at least an hour before bedtime. Having these around will make you more likely to switch them on when you can't sleep, which in turn can lead to more disturbed sleep. Artificial blue light comes from phone screens, electronic devices like iPads and the television. This blue light reduces the amount of melatonin in the body which is needed to help us to have a good quality sleep at bedtime.

### **Diet**

Avoid stimulants such as smoking, chocolate, and caffeine just before bed as they can stimulate the mind and keep you awake. Caffeine is found in tea, coffee, green tea and some fizzy drinks. You can try a de-caffeinated substitute which contains much less caffeine. In general, adults are recommended to have no more than 6 caffeinated drinks per day and to have the last caffeinated drink before 4-6pm, for at least 4 hours before bed.

Eat regularly throughout the day and try to avoid eating meals packed with fat and protein straight before going to bed. Reduce your alcohol intake before bed since alcohol reduces sleep quality. Warm milky drinks can help you to sleep.

### **Manage stress**

Feeling relaxed before bed can help with promoting a good quality sleep. Try relaxation methods before bed, such as relaxing music/meditation tapes/warm baths. Mindfulness techniques can help to accept the thoughts in your head and see the benefits of the rest you are getting rather than focusing on anxious thoughts. Try not to use bedtime as a time to reflect on the day, this should be done before getting into bed. Worrying, especially about not sleeping, will keep you awake and further disturb sleep.

It is important to have a wind-down period of approximately 90 minutes before bedtime. Try to do this regularly every night so that it become associated with sleeping.

### **Environment**

Keep your bedroom a place to go at bedtime to sleep and sex. Avoid watching TV, making phone calls and eating in bed if sleep is a problem as these activities will stop your mind associating being in bed with sleep. Make sure that your bedroom is free from clutter and relaxing. Your bedroom should be quiet, a suitable temperature and dark and phone is on silent. Avoid extreme room temperatures but anything within the range of 65 degrees Fahrenheit or 18 degrees Celsius (15.6 to 19.4C) Try using ear plugs, eye masks or black out blinds to reduce disturbances. Turn out the light soon after getting into bed.

### **Get up out of bed if you are not sleeping**

If you are struggling to get to sleep, try getting up after 20-30 minutes and leave the bedroom. A relaxing activity for example, relaxation/reading/listening to music can help you to feel calm, sleepy, and return to bed when feeling sleepy again. Repeat this action until you have fallen asleep. Getting enough good sleep is an essential part of looking after your health and wellbeing. Here are some of the health benefits of sleep and why it's important to make good quality sleep a priority.

It's important to know that improving sleep hygiene won't always resolve sleep problems. If you have long-lasting or severe sleeping problems e.g. serious insomnia, obstructive sleep apnea or daytime sleepiness, it's best to talk with a doctor who can recommend the most appropriate course of action or treatment.

### **Benefits of a good night's sleep**

- 1. Improves your attention and concentration** - Not sleeping well can negatively impair your attention span, concentration, thinking, problem solving and reaction times. So, getting plenty of sleep can help you to stay alert and focused all day long.
- 2. Learn and make memories** - As you sleep, your brain begins to organise and process all the information you've taken in during the day. It changes your short-term memories into long-term memories. This helps you to learn and means that when you wake up, you can often see things more clearly.
- 3. Helps you maintain a healthy weight** - Not getting enough sleep can make it more difficult to control your appetite and might cause you to gain weight. If you're not sleeping properly, your body will need more energy because it's awake for longer.
- 4. Keeps your heart healthy** - A lack of sleep can increase your risk of developing high blood pressure, diabetes, and coronary heart disease. Getting enough sleep is an important factor in looking after your cardiovascular health.
- 5. Keeps your immune system strong** - Getting a good night's sleep can help to keep your immune system strong and avoid picking up infections. A good night's sleep helps to strengthen your body's immune response and is essential to allow your mind and body to rest and recover when you're not feeling well.
- 6. Take care of your emotional wellbeing** - If you've got a lot on your mind and are struggling with your emotions, going over things in your head can often keep you awake at night. Try practising mindfulness or putting pen to paper and writing your concerns in a diary before bed. This could help put your thoughts in order and help you to get to sleep.
- 7. Look after your mental health** - Not only is sleep important when looking after your physical health, but it plays an important role in looking after your mental health too. If you're not sleeping properly, you're at a higher risk of developing poor mental health.
- 8. Reduce your stress levels** - When you're feeling stressed, your body releases 'stress hormones', for example cortisol, which can keep you awake. A good night's sleep can have the opposite effect and relax the systems in your body that are responsible for this stress response.
- 9. Maintain good relationships** - It's no secret that a bad night's sleep can leave you feeling grumpy. So making sure to get enough good sleep can help to put you in a more positive headspace.

**Sleepio:** The Sleepio app is a clinically evidenced sleep improvement programme that is fully automated and highly personalised, using cognitive behavioural techniques to help improve poor sleep. You can download Sleepio via the App Store and Google Play.

To help improve overall sleep and wellness, the World Sleep Society has created 10 tips for healthier sleep in adults:



### Sleep Hygiene and Pain Management

- Ideas are not rigid or prescriptive, making changes all at once maybe overwhelming, making a few changes at a time may be less overwhelming
- One alone may not benefit

What affects our sleep?	What can we do to help ourselves?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worry/stress/</li> <li>• Over Thinking/busy mind/not feeling like I can switch off</li> <li>• Not calm/tense/frustrated/annoyed</li> <li>• Focussing on pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diaphragmatic breathing -</li> <li>• Relaxation/Mindfulness – practice these in day initially in calm state to train body and mind</li> <li>• Thought Diffusion</li> <li>• Worry Tree</li> <li>• Other calming techniques – music, nature sounds (Dark Screen)</li> <li>• Aromatherapy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discomfort – weight of quilt/bedding, night wear, fabrics, pets on bed (can be comfort too), partner's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider bedding and night wear - are they comfortable enough?</li> <li>• Does mattress or pillows need attention/replacement/upgrading</li> </ul>

<p>movements, children coming into your bed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain</li> <li>• Tension in muscles</li> <li>• Stiffness</li> <li>• Itching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More pillows or cushions</li> <li>• Body pillow</li> <li>• Kind to self – repositioning or getting up and moving may be helpful to ease pain and help to return to calm state</li> <li>• Weighted blankets</li> <li>• Lighter blankets/no blankets and more layers</li> <li>• Bed cradle for allodynia</li> <li>• Train pets to lie elsewhere</li> <li>• Sleep train children to go back to own sleep space.</li> <li>• Antihistamines/temperatures</li> <li>• Textures of bedding/pjs</li> </ul>
<p>Bladder/bowel issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ?do you need to speak to GP or practice nurse</li> <li>• Get up and go and then resettle and try breathing/relaxation</li> <li>• Dietary needs</li> <li>• Medication</li> <li>• Keep hydrated (concentrated/strong urine can be more of an irritant than a full bladder.</li> </ul>
<p>Temperature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of room</li> <li>• Of self</li> <li>• Hormones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep Foundation – Drs recommend 15.6 to 19.4 degrees Celsius (60-67 degrees F)</li> <li>• Fans</li> <li>• Ice</li> <li>• In summer if safe open windows or loft hatch</li> <li>• Cool max pads for chair/bed</li> <li>• Layers so that you can take off or put on easily</li> <li>• Liaise with GP or pharmacist re: hormone medication</li> </ul>
<p>Dry mouth/thirst/dehydration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saliva spray, water bottle next to bed, oral foam swabs</li> <li>• Working on anxiety management</li> <li>• Having water next to bed</li> <li>• Drink more during day</li> <li>• Milk before bed digests differently to water</li> </ul>
<p>Caffeine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce or swap to herbal or decaff, water or milk</li> <li>• Warm milky or malty drinks promote calm</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue or UV Light</li> <li>• Screens – TVs, phones, tablets and PCs</li> <li>• Light bedroom</li> <li>• Room isn't dark enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce all screen times incl TV, laptops, tablets, phones or PCs 1-2 hours before bed – longer if possible</li> <li>• Keep bedroom dark to block daylight as sun rises, esp in summer months</li> <li>• Warm yellow/orange light better for reading, doing paper puzzles like word search/crosswords etc.</li> <li>• If need a small amount of light consider plug in night light, salt lamp</li> <li>• Night mode/shift on certain gadgets</li> </ul> <p>TV and other blue screens keep Melatonin brain suppressed therefore you may nod off but not be sleepy enough if you wake. Keeping dark room and less blue light 2 hours before bed increases Melatonin making you sleepier.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise – esp if infrequent</li> <li>• Tinnitus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under pillow speakers</li> <li>• Ear pods/headphones – wireless reduces risk of getting caught up in wires</li> <li>• Ear plugs</li> <li>• Remove things that are making the noise.</li> <li>• Pets may help you feel safe if neighbourhood is cause of noise</li> <li>• Get appropriate tinnitus advice from audiology service</li> <li>• Consider another sleep space a few days a week if it is partner snoring</li> </ul>
Alcohol	<p>This is a stimulant, and you may nod off but when you get to your light sleep phase you may come round more than worries and pain increases.</p> <p>Also, an unhelpful coping mechanism/habit</p>
Smoking	This is also a stimulant.
Eating heavy or spicy meals before bed/reflux/indigestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid heavy or spicy meals before bed</li> <li>• Seek GP advice if regular occurrence of reflux or indigestion</li> </ul>
Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to stick to a regular sleep pattern</li> <li>• Add in some ‘wind down time’ like milky drink, warm bath/shower, read or do paper puzzles, listen to music</li> <li>• If sleep training - to go to bed at certain time consider moving current bed time by 10 mins a night in a graded approach until you get to your desired time</li> </ul>
Clock watching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can stimulate you or increase thoughts/worries</li> <li>• If looking at gadget to check time, UV light is unhelpful.</li> <li>• Might get deepest sleep towards end of night and this could prevent you from getting that quality sleep.</li> </ul>
Exercise and fresh air/being active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking , swimming, gym, yoga, pilates</li> <li>• Overdoing might not be helpful</li> <li>• Being sedentary is equally as unhelpful</li> <li>• Getting the balance and pacing/planning and prioritising is key</li> <li>• Being active in chores/house jobs etc.e</li> </ul>
Napping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set timers if you feel you need some napping time</li> <li>• Set timers if you are practicing breathing and relaxation during the day therefore if you do fall asleep you will have your alarm on</li> <li>• Try to avoid napping and set up good bed time routines instead</li> <li>• Sometimes a 30min-1 hr nap is helpful and needed – we are all individual</li> </ul>