



Better Sleep

FACTS

- The average amount of sleep a person needs each day is 6 to 8 hours
- Good rest is almost as good as sleep
- Sleep comes in waves and like a surfer you need to know when the waves occur and to catch them at the right time
- You won't go crazy if you miss a night or two of sleep
- However, prolonged sleep deprivation or disturbances will impair mental alertness and health
- (As a general rule) Adolescents need more sleep than children or adults
- The Adolescent body clock is set later than children or adults.

TIPS

1. Go to bed when you are sleepy.

Many people make a decision to go to bed after hours of study without thinking about their body's needs.

Sometimes if you try to go to sleep after study you can be quite worked up and not be ready for sleep.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR SLEEP:

- Sign off the work you have been doing – tick off tasks completed, make a list of things to do tomorrow, put this in a special place, tidy your desk a little, shut down your computer.
- Wind down – have a cup of warm milk or herbal tea, read a restful book or magazine, listen to quiet music, have a shower. Do all this calmly.
- Prepare your bed for sleep – make sure it is comfortable and a good place to sleep.
- Avoid big meals and stimulants like tea, coffee, alcohol, energy drinks or cigarettes before bed.

2. Make your bed a place of rest and relaxation.

It is advised that you don't read or listen to music in bed before you go to sleep. Many students will dispute this and do use music and light reading to relax in bed. Sometimes reading academic text seems like it will put you to sleep!

It is NOT a good idea to study in bed.

Your bed needs to be a place of rest and relaxation.

3. Get up if you are still awake and restless after half an hour.

- Do something quiet like read a magazine, have a cup of warm milk or herbal tea.
- Avoid high-energy activities and stimulants.

Better Sleep (cont.)

- Go back to bed when you are feeling sleepy and try to go to sleep again.
- Don't worry if you're not sleepy – more sleep is lost through worrying. Only prolonged sleep disturbance is unhealthy.

However if you are lying in bed feeling relaxed and are OK about this, then stay in bed as long as this feeling remains. You will fall asleep.

Remember you want to associate your bed with rest and sleep.

4. Try the tips in 2 & 3 if you wake during the night and can't go back to sleep.

Don't be tempted to get up and do anything too exciting like emailing friends, surfing the net or doing more study.

5. Establish a routine.

Get up at the same time each morning and go to bed at roughly the same time each night. If possible maintain this routine on the weekends as the body clock will be disturbed if the routine of sleep is radically altered. Set an alarm clock if necessary. Try not to nap during the day as this takes the edge of sleepiness at night. Also don't over sleep – this will not make you more alert, rather the opposite. It will make you feel more tired and sluggish.

6. Do some exercise during the day every day, but never late at night.

Choose something you enjoy and exercise with a friend to maintain enthusiasm on a regular basis, three or more times per week.

7. Do some relaxation before bed.

Use a relaxation tape, do some gentle breathing exercises, some yoga or meditation.

8. Think about your physical environment.

Is your bedroom a place you like to be? To sleep in? Make changes to the room that will help like adjust the lighting, change the bed covers, pillow, reduce or remove other interrupting sounds like TV or radio, close doors, talk to flat mates about your needs.

9. Get help if you've got worries/things on your mind.

Maybe they need working through. Talk to a friend, the person concerned, a Counsellor, Chaplain, your lecturer, parents etc.

Contact the Counselling Service on 8344-6927 for a free, confidential service to all University members.

