

HEALTH · WELLNESS GUIDE

Better Sleep, Better Life

Seven science-backed habits for deeper,
more restful nights

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WHY IT MATTERS

Why Sleep Is Essential

Sleep is not wasted time. While you rest, your brain consolidates memories, your body repairs tissue, and your hormones and immune system reset for the next day.

Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep per night, while teenagers need around eight to ten hours and younger children need even more. Regularly sleeping less than you need is linked with poorer concentration, mood changes, weaker immunity and a higher risk of long-term health problems such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and weight gain.

What happens while you sleep

**Light sleep**

Heart rate and breathing slow down as the body begins to relax.

**Deep sleep**

The body repairs muscles and tissues and supports the immune system.

**REM sleep**

The brain is active, dreams are vivid and memories are processed.

**Sleep cycles**

A full cycle lasts about 90 minutes and repeats several times each night.

“Good sleep is not a luxury. It is one of the three pillars of health, together with nutrition and physical activity.”

PRACTICAL STEPS

Seven Habits for Better Sleep

Small, consistent changes to your evening routine and bedroom can improve how quickly you fall asleep and how rested you feel in the morning.

**Keep a regular schedule**

Go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day, including weekends.

**Create a restful bedroom**

Keep it dark, quiet and cool. Many people sleep best at around 16 to 19 degrees Celsius.

**Switch off screens**

Put phones and laptops away 30 to 60 minutes before bed to avoid bright light and stimulation.

**Watch caffeine and alcohol**

Avoid caffeine in the afternoon. Alcohol may help you drop off but disrupts sleep later in the night.

**Move during the day**

Regular exercise and daylight exposure help you fall asleep more easily. Avoid intense workouts right before bed.

**Build a wind-down routine**

Read, stretch, take a warm shower or listen to calm music to signal to your body that it is time to rest.

Bonus tip

- Avoid heavy meals late in the evening, since they can cause discomfort and disturb sleep
- If you cannot sleep after about 20 minutes, get up, do something calm in dim light, and return when sleepy
- Use your bed only for sleep, so your brain links it with rest

WHEN TO GET HELP

Common Sleep Problems

Occasional bad nights are normal. Persistent problems, however, can affect daily life and may need professional attention.

**Insomnia**

Difficulty falling asleep, waking often or waking too early, on most nights for weeks.

**Sleep apnea**

Breathing repeatedly stops during sleep. Loud snoring and daytime sleepiness are common signs.

**Restless legs**

An uncomfortable urge to move the legs in the evening, which makes it hard to settle.

**Shift-work disruption**

Irregular hours conflict with the body clock and reduce sleep quality.

Talk to a doctor if you

- Struggle to sleep at least three nights a week for more than a month
- Snore loudly, gasp or stop breathing during sleep, or feel exhausted despite a full night in bed
- Feel sleepy while driving or at work
- Notice that poor sleep is affecting mood, memory or relationships

Sleeping pills and supplements are not a long-term solution for most people. Doctors often recommend behavioural approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), which has strong evidence for lasting improvement. Always ask a healthcare professional before taking any sleep medication.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Your Sleep Checklist

Use this simple checklist to review your habits and improve your nights step by step.

Tonight, try to

- Go to bed at your usual time and aim for at least seven hours
- Keep the bedroom dark, quiet and cool
- Stop using screens an hour before sleep
- Skip caffeine after the afternoon and keep alcohol low
- Spend a few minutes winding down with a calm routine

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