# Sleep Tips[1]

### Get Moving

Keep your body moving and get some fresh air outdoors. This will help you sleep better at night. Avoid strenuous exercise within 4hrs of bedtime.

### Make a List & Plan Ahead

Worries and tasks keeping you awake? Clear your mind. Write it down or make a to do list.
Set your alarm and give yourself enough time to get ready. Organize your bag and make your lunch the night before.

### Bedtime Routine

Go to bed and get up around the same time every day even on weekends! This will help your body develop a regular sleep rhythm. Create a routine (e.g. shower, snack, read).

### Sleep Environment

Your room should be cool and dark. Try using your bed for sleeping only. Watch TV on the couch or read in a chair. This will help your body associate your with sleep.

### Calming Practices

Try and evening walk, read a book or magazine, stretch, meditation, deep and focused breathing exercises.

### Avoid Caffeine

Avoid caffeine 6-8hrs before going to bed. This includes coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks, chocolate, and some medications.

### Avoid Nicotine

Nicotine is a stimulant that will make it harder to fall asleep and have a restful night. It can also irritate your nose, throat, and lungs which might affect your breathing.

### No Naps!

Napping will cause the body to lose its sleep rhythm. If you feel tired, try re-energizing by going outside, taking a walk or doing something active. If you must nap, keep it to no more than 30 minutes.

### Food

Being hungry can prevent a good night's sleep. Make sure to honour your bodies hunger cues and try a snack before bed.

### Track Your Sleep

Use an app or record in a journal. This may help you to discover patterns or factors affecting your sleep.

### No Clock Watching!

As tempting as it may be, avoid looking at the clock while falling asleep. It could make you anxious.

### Keep Bedtime Tech Free

Turn off your phones, TVs and computers 1 hr before bed. Blue light makes it harder to fall asleep. Use an alarm clock instead of your phone.

1. Centre for Clinical Interventions (2008). Sleep hygiene. Retrieved from http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

## Why sleep at all?

Sleep is essential! We need sleep to be at our best both mentally and physically.

Sleep is important for:
- your memory and concentration
- a stronger immune system
- mental well-being and a better mood
- your ability to manage stress
- your energy level
- faster reaction time
- positive happy relationships

## How much sleep is best?

Youth aged 13-18 should be sleeping for **8 -10 hours** every night! [2]

Teens often experience a change in their sleep/wake times during puberty. This is caused by changing hormones. This makes your body want to stay awake later at night and remain sleeping later into the morning. This is why you're able to stay awake until 2am and sleep until noon!

2,3 Nationalsleepfoundation.org

---

**MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT**

## Technology and Sleep

- The use of screens at bedtime can make it hard to fall asleep. That is because the blue light emitted from these devices prevents the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin from being released in the brain[3].
- Watching TV, using ipads, laptops, cell phones and playing video games may also stimulate the brain rather than relax it before bed.
- The temptation to use cell phones in bed may contribute to a lack of sleep and being awakened by friends.

## Tips:

- In the evening, dim the brightness on screens and switch to yellows or reds instead of the blue light.
- To encourage sleep, avoid use of any screens including cell phones, at least one hour before bedtime.
- It is best to remove all electronic devices from the bedroom.

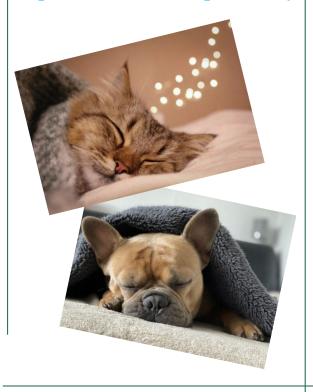*Revised October 2022*

---

**MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT**

# Sleep:

A guide to a better nights' sleep





**www.healthunit.com**