



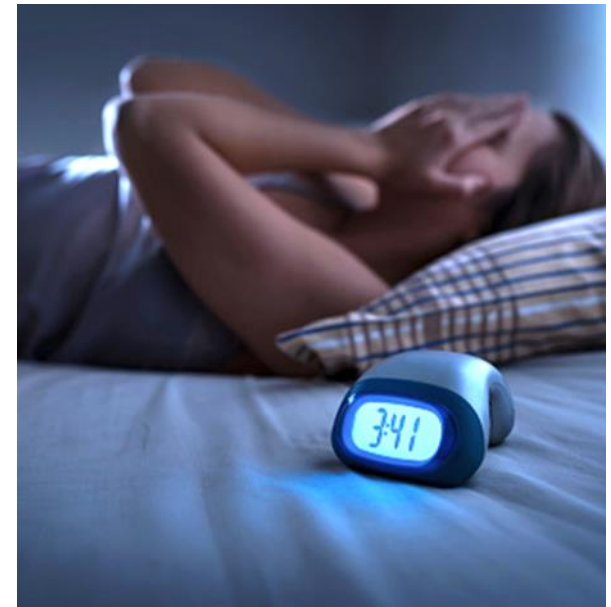
The Art of Sleep

Troubled mind, tired body, stressed out, fear, anxiety, exams, projects, travelling & jetlag, are common in our lives making falling asleep and sleeping well a problem. Nothing feels more defeating than checking the time in the dark and realizing you haven't been able to sleep yet another night. And instead of falling asleep you realize your mathematical abilities have improved as you count sheep.

Sleep: an existential necessity for maintaining health

Sleep is crucial for our health, performance and safety. An occasional night without sleep is not dangerous even though it may affect our daily routine, however chronic lack of sleep affects our overall health in many ways, such as:

- Decreases the ability to stay alert, concentrate and function properly causing errors and accidents
- Impairs judgment and critical thinking
- Affects our mental health: stress, anxiety, depression
- Contributes to chronic fatigue
- Reduces productivity
- Affects mood, behavior and attitude: mood swings and irritability
- Sleep deprivation can lead to health problems such as heart disease: irregular heart beat and heart attack, high blood pressure, diabetes stroke, obesity



Rule out a sleep disorder

If sleep problems continue and become chronic make sure to see a health professional as possible for physical or mental assessment.

Physically: snoring, sleep apnea, GERD, restless legs syndrome, hormonal, thyroid, ...other
Mentally: anxiety, stress, tension and even depression



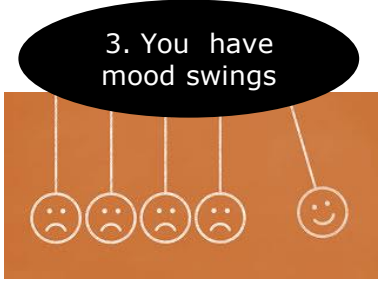
Sleep: Signs you are not sleeping enough and well



1. You consume more caffeine



2. Your memory & focus feel dim



3. You have mood swings



4. Your eyes show it: red, puffy, dark circles, bags



5. You crave junk food



6. You gain weight



7. You feel depressed



8. You feel crummy in the morning



9. You battle breakouts



The Great 8

How long should we sleep?

- 8 hours of quality sleep, maybe slightly less or more depending on your age
- Ideally you should wake up naturally, without the use of an alarm
- If you wake up tired and spend the day waiting for bedtime, you may have a health problem or sleeping disorder
- You might be sleeping too much if you find yourself needing more than 8 to 9 hours of sleep plus naps on a regular basis
- Too much sleep can lead to many of the same side effects as sleeping too little, including: depression, irritability, cardiovascular problems
- Needing extra sleep could be due to a health or mental condition: Anxiety, Depression, Sleep apnea, Parkinson's disease, Diabetes, Heart disease, Obesity, Thyroid disorders, Asthma
- You might also experience irritability, and forgetfulness and be more prone to accidents

Benefits of sleep

1. Boosts your immune system
2. Helps your mental wellbeing
3. Supports brain function
4. Contributes to longer life span
5. Boosts fertility
6. Prevents weight gain
7. Keeps the heart healthy
8. Reduces inflammation
9. Helps you have glowing skin

Consequences of not sleeping enough on regular basis

Not sleeping enough and bad quality sleep may lead to:

1. Getting sick more often
1. High blood pressure (hypertension)
2. Diabetes
3. Heart disease
4. Obesity
5. Depression





The Circadian Rhythm

Should we wake up when the sun is up?

- Our body has a natural time-keeping clock known as the "circadian rhythm" It affects our brain, body and hormones, helping us stay awake and telling our body when it's time to sleep.
- Natural sunlight helps keep your circadian rhythm healthy. This improves daytime energy as well as nighttime sleep quality and duration.
- Ideally, it's best to go to bed earlier in the night and wake up early each day.
- If that is not possible, it's far more important to make sure we get enough quality sleep. We can ensure this happens by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day.
- Circadian rhythm disorders are problems with your "internal body clock" that keeps your biological processes in step. Your normal circadian rhythm is set by the cycle of light and dark over 24 hours. It plays a key role in things like when you sleep and when you wake. Patterns of brain waves, hormone production, cell regrowth, and other activities are linked to this cycle.

Benefits of sleeping and waking up early

1. Body System Reboot
2. More Energy
3. More Organized "Not enough hours in the day"
4. More Time to Exercise
5. Healthier Eating
6. More Productive
7. Helps your Skin Look Healthy
8. Getting into the Routine
9. Positive Outlook in life

People with circadian rhythm disorders may have problems:

- Falling asleep
- Staying asleep
- Waking up too early and not being able to go back to sleep
- Getting sleep but not feeling refreshed by it
- Feeling alert during the day
- Poor concentration
- Impaired performance, including lower cognitive skills
- Poor coordination
- Headaches
- Stomach problems





Nap like a Pro

Duration: 15 and 30 minutes

Longer than 30 minutes gets you into deeper stages of sleep, from which it's more difficult to awaken and can make it more difficult to fall asleep at night. however 60 minutes naps may improve long term memory

Best time: 13:00-16:00. (middle of the afternoon) Later than 16:00 may impact your daily sleeping pattern.

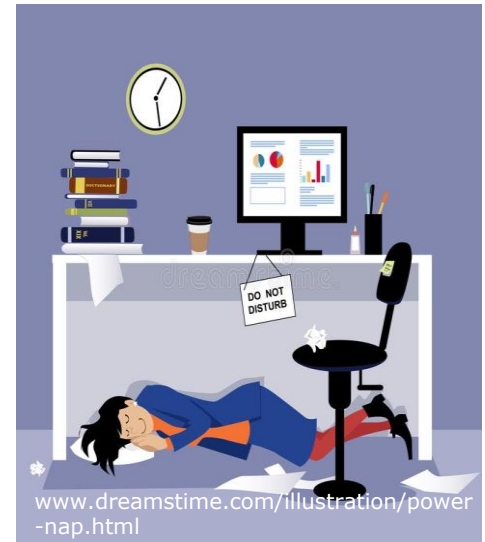
Where: anywhere: floor, desk, couch, park

Condition: calm, cool in the summer warm in winter,
The ideal place to practice power napping is somewhere comfortable, but not too comfortable.

How: schedule it, set the alarm, be consistent, it takes 1-2 weeks of practice to become good at it, try to nap in the same pose with the same music or background noise.
Even if you do not nap you will still feel more rested and energized.

Benefits:

- Restore alertness
- Enhances performance and memory
- Reduce mistakes and accidents
- Rejuvenate
- Relax mind, body and spirit



How about a Coffee Nap?

A mid-afternoon a coffee may be easier to do in order to energize you, but compared to a short nap the results are not the same.

- ✓ **20 minute nap**
body and brain will be relaxed and ready for mental and physical effort
- ✓ **1 cup of coffee**
temporarily energized, eventually you will be tired, jittery, make more mistakes
- ✓ **Smart alternative**
Drink some coffee right before your nap. It will take 20 minutes for the caffeine to kick in, just as you as finishing your nap!





Lifestyle & Sleep

Nutrition and Exercise play an important role in the quality of sleep

Nutrition:

- Have a healthy diet
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Wine or chocolate as a snack before bed is not a wise choice. Chocolate contains caffeine, which is a stimulant. Alcohol has a similar effect even though people think it makes them a little sleepy it actually disrupts sleep during the night.
- Stay away from spicy and acidic food (such as citrus fruits and juices) which can give you heartburn.
- Don't go to bed hungry, a grumbling stomach can be distracting enough to keep you awake; eat a small healthy snack (such as an apple with a slice of cheese or a few whole-wheat crackers) to satisfy you until breakfast.
- Don't go to sleep with an overly full belly; avoid eating a big meal within two to three hours of bedtime.

Exercise:

- Exercise boosts the effect of natural sleep hormones such as melatonin.
- People who exercise have an easier time falling asleep.
- Watch the timing of the workout. Exercising too close to bedtime can be stimulating.
- Watch the intensity of the workout. High impact aAerobics will elevate the heart rate close to your sleep time
- A morning workout is ideal. Exposing yourself to bright daylight first thing in the morning will help the natural circadian rhythm



Complementary methods to help you sleep:

[Essential oils or Aromatherapy](#), Breathing Techniques, [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#), [Tapping](#), Massage, Exercises to induce sleep and Meditation



Words for the Wise: Secrets to the Art of Sleep

1. Exercise boosts the effect of natural sleep hormones such as melatonin, people who exercised had an easier time falling asleep. Just watch the timing of your workouts. Exercising too close to bedtime can be stimulating. A morning workout is ideal. Exposing yourself to bright daylight first thing in the morning will help the natural circadian rhythm.
2. Reserve bed for sleep (and sex 😊) It is not an office: no phone calls, emails, no late-night TV there. Your bed needs to be a stimulus for sleeping not for wakefulness.
3. Keep the bedroom comfortable, calm, quite, dark, cool in the summer and warm in winter
4. Start a sleep ritual. When you were a child and your mother read you a story and tucked you into bed every night, this comforting ritual helped put you to sleep. Even now, bedtime rituals can have a similar effect as they signal the body and mind that it's time to sleep. Drink a glass of warm milk, chamomile, take a bath, listen to calming music to unwind
5. Eat, but not too much. A grumbling stomach can be distracting enough to keep you awake, but so can an overly full belly. Avoid eating a big meal within two to three hours of bedtime. If you're hungry right before bed, eat a small healthy snack (such as an apple with a slice of cheese or a few whole-wheat crackers) to satisfy you until breakfast.
6. Avoid alcohol and caffeine. If you have a snack before bed, wine and chocolate shouldn't be part of it. Chocolate contains caffeine, which is a stimulant. Alcohol has a similar effect. You may think it makes you sleepy, but it's actually a stimulant and disrupts sleep. Stay away from acidic food (such as citrus fruits and juices) or spicy, which can give you heartburn.
7. De-stress. Stress is a stimulus. It activates the fight-or-flight hormones that work against sleep. Give yourself time to wind down before bed, breathing exercises, meditation, tapping, essential oils, bedtime exercises.
8. Sleep and Nap like a Pro. Eight (8) quality sleep hours and short power naps in the afternoon have numerous benefits

Bedtime stories:

- room temperature 18-21C
- mat
- pillow
- clothing
- ventilation
- sleep positions





So when it comes to the Art of Sleep, remember
You are the artist!



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Sources & Further reading: Sources & Further reading: www.nlm.nih.gov/; www.health.harvard.edu/sleep/8-secrets-to-a-good-nights-sleep; www.thegoodbody.com/benefits-of-sleeping-early/; www.sleepfoundation.org/search/node?keys=nap; <https://www.sleep.org/articles/napping-at-work/>; <https://www.healthline.com/health/guide-to-power-naps#How-does-a-power-nap-compare-to-a-coffee>; <https://storware.eu/blog/power-naps-performance-booster/>; <https://medium.com/skilluped/everything-you-need-to-know-about-power-napping-and-why-you-should-do-it-daily-2b8ad13aa62b>; <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/17-tips-to-sleep-better#1.-Increase-bright-light-exposure-during-the-day>; <https://www.healthline.com/health/best-time-to-sleep#when-to-go-to-sleep>; <https://www.thegoodbody.com/benefits-of-sleeping-early/>; <https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/circadian-rhythm-disorder-tests>; <https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/circadian-rhythm-disorder-tests>

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