

Student Wellbeing

Sleep



Sleep is important for physical and mental health. On average, adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night. At some stage, most of us experience difficulty with sleeping. Some people will have trouble falling asleep initially, others will wake frequently during the night and struggle to get back to sleep, and others may find they are sleeping too long. Having trouble sleeping may be related to worry about assignments or exams, issues in your personal life, or there may be another health condition or pain getting in the way of a good night's sleep. Ongoing difficulties with sleep can cause a number of negative consequences. You may become more irritable, have a harder time concentrating, or struggle to manage your anxiety.

Tips

- Try and get to bed before midnight. Our deeper sleep occurs earlier in the evening and our lighter sleep occurs in the early hours of the morning. The earlier you get to sleep the more rested you should feel.
- Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day regardless of your schedule
- Exercise regularly. Going for an early morning walk will expose your body to sunlight and help adjust your body clock. But avoid exercise just before bed as it will interfere with the wind-down messages.
- Develop a wind-down routine at night. Turn off the television and avoid all screen time for 30 minutes before bed, brush your teeth, get dressed for bed and maybe do some meditation or relaxation.
- Eat a light meal in the evenings. Warm milk and herbal teas have been known to improve sleep. Avoid substances which might make sleep difficult, such as alcohol, chocolate, coffee, tea, cigarettes and heavy meals.
- Make sure your room is ready for sleep, your bed is free from clothes and books, the lights are off, alarm is set and any devices that may wake you are turned off or to silent. It's also a good idea not to use your bed as a study area as this can confuse your sleep cues.
- You should go to bed when you feel sleepy. Sleep comes in 90 minute rhythmic cycles of lighter and deeper sleep, and if you miss the start of a cycle it can take longer before your body is ready for the next one.
- If you go to bed and you haven't fallen asleep within 20 minutes get back up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy again. Again, avoid all the wake signs of screens and bright lights or activities which will send wake signals to your brain. Try some relaxation, or wiping down the kitchen counter in low light, or read a short article.
- If you are struggling to get to sleep because you are worried about something or have a lot on your mind, try writing a list for things to do tomorrow, or a list of worries and how you will address them tomorrow.
- Try to avoid napping during the day, even if you feel tired.

If you are concerned about your sleep and would like additional support, make an appointment with your GP or contact us at Student Wellbeing.

Online resources

Australasian Sleep Association
www.sleep.org.au

Sleep Health Foundation:
www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au

This Way Up - Student Wellbeing Program

A free online course with practical strategies for coping with stress and study.

www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/student-wellbeing-program

Apps

My Sleep Button

My Sleep Button is an app designed to help you fall asleep.

www.mysleepbutton.com/home

Sleep Cycle

Sleep cycle analyses your sleep and wakes you up in your lightest sleep period.

www.sleepcycle.com

Sleep Time

Sleep Time doubles as a sleep analysis app and alarm clock.

www.azumio.com/apps/sleep-time/overview



Access support and more information

www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling or call (02) 4921 6622

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