STUDY SKILLS NEWSLETTER TIP FOR AUGUST

Students and Sleep

How much sleep do I need?

- Different people need a different amount of sleep in order to function optimally during the day. Whilst most adults need about 8 hours sleep a night, teenagers need more like 9 hours and 15 minutes sleep per night. Working out how much sleep you need will take a little time and perseverance. Record how you feel during the day based on how much sleep you had a night and a pattern will start to appear.

- Getting a good sleep is important for your mind and body. Sleep lets your body rest and repair, it helps maintain a healthy immune system and sleep is needed so your body has the energy it needs during the day for activity and concentration. Sleeping well helps you to stay mentally healthy too.

- Signs that perhaps you aren’t getting enough sleep or enough good quality sleep include irregular sleep patterns, feeling tired and drowsy during the day, falling asleep at school or in the afternoon, trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, loud snoring, sleepwalking or night terrors and difficulties with concentration and memory.

Top Tips for getting to sleep / sleep routine / falling asleep

- Have a regular bed time and wake up time. A regular bed time helps to set your body clock so your body knows it’s time to sleep. Waking up at (or near) the same time each day also helps your body to establish a sleep pattern. Get plenty of sunlight during the day too.

- Establish a bed time ritual. Doing a series of actions before bed also helps your body to prepare for sleep. Ideas include, a warm bath or shower, reading a book, listening to quiet music or doing some gentle stretches.

- Avoid technology in the hour before bed, including TV, computers and phones.

- Exercise during the day so that your body is ready for rest at night.

- Don’t eat big meals at night. Eat as early as possible and try to avoid rich, heavy food close to bed time.

- Limit your caffeine during the day and don’t drink any caffeine in the afternoon or evening.

- Don’t have too much liquid in the evening....and if you are drinking, consider a herbal tea like chamomile.

- Worrying about problems at school or with friends often stops you from getting to sleep. Talk to a trusted person about things that are worrying you to find ways to solve your problems. You could also try some relaxation exercises such as meditation or positive visualisation.

- Have your room as dark as possible when trying to get to sleep. Use a sleep mask if you need to avoid light e.g. from electronic devices, street lights etc.

Staying Asleep

- Make sure the temperature of your room is comfortable. Too cold and you may have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. Too warm and the heat will also wake you.

- Having a quiet environment will help you stay asleep. If loud noises often wake you, having some consistent “white noise” can be helpful. Earplugs may also work for some people.
A comfortable bed which is large enough for you to spread out and is supportive will help you to sleep well, as will a comfortable pillow which provides the right amount of support for your neck.

- Good ventilation in your room helps to get rid of toxins and keep the air you are breathing fresh. A potted plant in your room may help.
- Make sure you go to the toilet just before you get into bed.

**Good quality sleep**

- Smelling lavender while you sleep might improve the quality of your sleep. Try a few drops of lavender oil in your washing or on your pillow, or using lavender scented soap.
- Have a good sleep environment. Clear your room of clutter. Dust regularly. Have calming colours in your room.
- Try rearranging your room according to Feng Shui principles, whereby you can see the door from your bed, but your bed is not directly facing the door. This may mean putting your bed on an angle.

**Feeling refreshed after sleep**

- First thing in the morning, drink a glass of water to help you wake up and rehydrate.
- Do some gentle stretches or more vigorous exercise first thing in the morning as part of your morning ritual. This will also help to set your body clock.
- Practice deep breathing while you are still in bed to make sure your body is able to take in lots of oxygen and expel carbon dioxide.

**Where to go for help or more information**

- If you try out the tips here and are still having trouble with falling asleep or staying asleep, try talking to your doctor to see if there is a medical or other reason.

You can learn more about how to optimise your performance as a student at www.studyskillshandbook.com.au

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