

And How to get a good night sleep

Sleeping is much like eating, drinking and breathing... it is something that everyone does and it's essential to our physical and mental health. Getting a good night's sleep allows our bodies and minds to rest and re-energise. Here is a list of things that can contribute to your quality of sleep:



BODY – Make sure you look after your body

- Caffeine – ideally we should try and stop drinking caffeine at least 4 hours before bed. This is because caffeine is a stimulant and can keep you up and includes tea, coffee, Coca-Cola and chocolate.
- Alcohol – although we may sometimes use alcohol to help us get off to sleep, it actually disrupts sleep later on in the night, therefore stopping us from benefitting and getting a full restful sleep. Try a relaxation exercises instead.
- Food – try to avoid having a big or spicy meal late on in the evening. Also try not to go to bed hungry.
- Exercise – Try to do some exercise (around 30minutes) every day, in order to make our bodies feel tired.

ENVIRONMENT – Make sure that the room you sleep in is a pleasant place to be

- Keep the bedroom clean and tidy
- Make sure the bedroom is cool (try to avoid extreme temperatures)
- Ensure that you have a comfortable mattress, pillows and sheets.
- Try to make the bedroom a quiet and dark environment (black-out blinds may help)
- Introduce pleasant smells such as a drop of lavender oil on your pillow.

ROUTINE – Having a bedtime routine helps teach us when it's time to sleep.

- It's best to keep to regular times for going to bed and getting up (even at the weekend!)
- Avoid having naps in the day – no matter how tired you feel. Naps are going to keep the problem going by making it harder to get to sleep the next night.
- Have at least an hour to unwind before bed – do something that makes you feel tired:
 - o Have a soothing drink such as camomile tea or something warm and milky
 - o Have a bath
 - o Try a relaxation or breathing exercise
 - o Read a book

The 20 minute Rule–

Your bed is for sleeping, so if you find that you can't sleep after around 30minutes:

- Get up and go to another room.
- If you have lots of thoughts racing through your mind, write them all down, and come back to them in the morning.
- Engage in another quiet, relaxing activity e.g. reading. Do this activity until you feel tired and only return to bed when you feel sleepy.
- If you still can't sleep after a further 20minutes get up and repeat this routine again.



Sleep Diary

Complete this form each day: write in the shaded area just before going to bed, and the non-shaded area in the morning

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