

SLEEP

These are not easy times in which to relax and unwind, and some of us have found our sleep patterns have been disrupted, having a big impact on how we function day to day.

This guide is to help you get the most out of your day...and night.

No lectures, just some advice and information about the virtues of getting enough sleep, including some important facts that may help *you* make some good choices for *you*.

The Science Bit

Sleep is essential for optimum brain function. During sleep, the immune system releases proteins that help your body fight infection, inflammation and trauma. Cortisol (aka stress hormone) levels drop during sleep to allow your body to rest and repair. It kicks in again just as you get up in the morning (a little bit of stress hormone is actually a good thing, depending on the time of day).



When you are in the land of nod, the brain actively processes the day's information and creates long-term memories with all the information it has gained during the day, ready for recall later.

No use arguing this one... **We feel better both physically and mentally when we sleep well.** We function better and perform better.

Interesting facts:

1. We have said you feel better when you sleep better but you are also more able to manage stress and you tend to eat better too.

2. In your teens your sleep pattern shifts towards later times, so it is perfectly natural to want to sleep later and wake up later (just not on a school day).

3. Teens need 8-10 hours of sleep each night to function at their best.

The school day means that teens tend to have irregular sleep patterns which messes with your biological clock and how well you sleep. However, this doesn't mean you can't make some tweaks to your routines to ensure you are getting enough quality sleep.

4. Exercise is crucial for good sleep.

What to do if you feel you are not getting enough Zzzs

1. Prioritise Sleep.

2. Keep a diary and make a note of what makes a good or bad night's sleep. Then decide what *you* need to do to make things better for *you*.

3. Make your bedroom a calm space in which to relax and sleep. Keep it cool, dark and quiet.

4. No caffeine or sugary foods or drinks late in the day.

5. Don't leave your homework until the end of the evening.

6. You won't like this one, but it is important... Steer clear of blue light technology: No smart phones, PCs, Ipads and games consoles. Instead try reading or listening to music for the last hour before bed.



7. Shower or bathe at night (it will save a few minutes in the morning too).

8. Make lists – clear your head of things that are on your mind, writing them down on paper frees your mind to concentrate on rest.

9. Think of three positive things that have happened that day. They don't have to be big things; just a funny comment; something that made you smile; a kindness or achieving something you set out to do, for example.

How to get to sleep

1. Keep the timing as regular as possible, it helps your body and mind recognise when to start to unwind and be receptive to sleep.

2. Regular relaxation exercises – light yoga stretches to unwind muscle tensions. Nothing too rigorous – you don't want any adrenalin pumping as you try to unwind.

3. Reading – preferably something calming (maybe not a Stephen King novel).

Listening to music helps distract the mind allowing you to drift into a relaxed state of mind.

And again... **avoid the technology** – it is not your friend at night.

Fatigue.

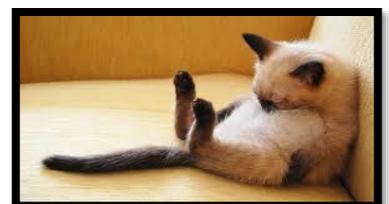


Fatigue can be caused by a variety of reasons. Sitting or lying on the sofa for long periods sends the message to your brain that it should be preparing to rest or sleep, which is why you never feel great after sitting around for long periods of time. Stretching, deep breaths and briskly walking around helps restore energy levels.

Ways to beat fatigue

1. Good posture

Your muscles have to work hard to keep your body 'aligned' but they work even harder if you hunch or slump, which causes aches and pains. Be mindful of how bad posture can affect your energy levels.



2.Sugar...again!

Refined sugars or fast sugars such as fizzy drinks, chocolate, sweets etc. cause spikes in energy, which is OK if you are running the 100 m race (and going for the world record). For day-to-day functioning, however, we need our blood sugar to stay pretty level. When the blood sugar peaks (a sugar rush) it just crashes a few hours later leaving you feeling fatigued and confusing your body and brain as to what you are expecting from them. The crash of energy affects mood, concentration and physical ability.

By maintaining a steady release of energy you feel more alert and ready for the day. Think about a slow release sugar breakfast such as porridge and banana, wholemeal toast, eggs or a low sugar cereal.

Stress and Worry

This can cause fatigue and affect your sleep pattern. It can cause aches in muscles, as you tend to tense your body when you are stressed or anxious, it also increases your heart rate, making the body work harder. All this can sap your energy levels and affect sleep. If you feel anxious or worried, focus on distractions - watch something funny, be creative, anything that takes your mind to a good place.

Vitamin D

Our stores of Vitamin D diminish during the winter season and many of us feel sluggish and tired in the darker months.

Get outdoors for a minimum of 30 minutes in the brighter, sunnier months. Exercising helps build Vitamin D stores and boost the immune system and strengthen bones. It also produces the hormone Serotonin, the mood-enhancing hormone.

Studies show that a lack of Vit D can have an adverse affect on sleep.

Depression in teens

There is significant research that demonstrates the link between depression in teens and their sleep or lack thereof.

If you feel you have low mood, perhaps think about your sleep routine and how you can improve it to make a difference to your mental health.

I hope you find some useful tips to help you achieve a good night's sleep, which hopefully, will improve your days too.

For some great resources see next page...



Take a look at our booklets, they can be found on the Wellbeing page of the School website:

- **Tips to cope with Anxiety and Stress**
- **Regulation Strategies**
- **SEND Resources for All – At a glance**

These booklets contain lots of useful information and resources that can aid sleep and relaxation and help with stress and anxiety...and not just whilst we are in lockdown.

Some more useful links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/>

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/teens-and-sleep>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/sleep-problems/>

<https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-sleep-problems/> <https://sleepcouncil.org.uk>

Instagram: @sleepschool – Dr. Guy Meadows offers 7 free meditation exercises