

The Importance of Sleep Hygiene

Getting an adequate quality and quantity of sleep can hugely benefit your physical and mental health. Unfortunately, sleep disturbances are common, especially among students, and many people report having trouble falling astruggling to fall asleep and/or staying asleep. It's important we work to improve our sleep hygiene and make the most out of the hours we can sleep.



Why quality sleep is important

Sleep can have a range of positive effects on your physical health, including affecting your heart health and strength of your immune system. The benefits sleep has for your physical health are significant and range from heart health to memory. While asleep, your blood pressure decreases and lessens the work that your heart must do. This short-term relief for your heart can have longstanding benefits for your overall health. In addition, continuous lack of sleep can adversely impact your immune system and your body's ability to fight germs. A lack of sleep can alter the way your immune cells work, causing them to attack slower and leading to you getting sick more often.



Benefits for your mental health

Sleep can significantly impact your mood from the beginning to the end of your day. Reflect on how you feel waking up for class after only a few hours of sleep., Not that fun, eh? A lack of sleep makes you more likely to experience feelings of grumpiness, irritability, and stress.

Your behaviour, including the likelihood that you will practice self-care, is also tied to sleep. You're much more likely to participate in activities that support your wellbeing if you're well rested. If you are energized during the day, you're more likely to exercise, paint, journal, or do anything else that brings you joy.

Sleep can affect your academics and concentration. Many students, for example, pull all-nighters in order to prepare for exams. This may be counterproductive as a lack of sleep can have negative effects on your ability to concentrate, solve problems, and make decisions.

How to better your sleep hygiene

1. Avoid caffeine close to bedtime.
2. Caffeine can have disruptive effects on your sleep; it is a stimulant and can make it hard for you to fall asleep. Try to stop ingesting any caffeine 4-6 hours before your bedtime.
3. Avoid drinking alcohol close to your bedtime.
4. It can sometimes feel like alcohol helps us fall asleep, however, it can often have the opposite effect. Alcohol before trying to sleep can lead to shaky arms and legs, as well as breathing problems.
5. Wake up at the same time every day.
6. Keeping the same wake-up time everyday helps you and your body get into a rhythm of consistent sleep. Staying up or waking up at different times will make it harder to build a strong sleep schedule.
7. Dim your lights and turn off electronics.
8. Lighting in your environment, including the light emitted from phones, laptops, and other electronics, can hinder the production of melatonin. Melatonin aids the body in feeling sleepy and falling asleep.

