

Sleep and Wellbeing



Sleep is instrumental for your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. During sleep, your body and brain rest, recuperate and recharge. Sleep is a vital part of day-to-day happiness. A good bedtime routine aids a range of things: from heart health and mental wellbeing to personal relationships; it strengthens your immune system and keeps you on top form.

Monitor your sleep: When do you go to sleep and when do you wake up? Do you wake during the night and, if so, how often? When averaged, this information will give you an idea of how many hours of sleep are required by your body. Keep a diary and use this information to create effective sleep patterns.



Sleep is a behaviour: As with any behaviour, sleep can be practiced. It's necessary to establish a good routine – try to go to bed and rise at regular times. The more you repeat this, the more your body learns your routine.



Think about your evening routine: What do you do in the evening, before bedtime? Reading a book or listening to a podcast before heading to bed can make falling asleep more likely.

Caffeine: You should reduce your caffeine intake in the evenings. Coffee, tea and fizzy drinks are stimulants and can keep you awake.

Eat the right foods: Certain foods cause sleepiness. The best bedtime snack is one that contains both carbohydrates and protein, such as cereal with milk, peanut butter on toast or cheese and crackers. Ditch the unhelpful stuff before bed and make yourself something that will help you catch some zzz's.

Exercise: Exercising in the evenings can help induce sleep. Even a moderate workout can do the trick. Exercise helps us burn the excess energy, created by stressors throughout the day, that will keep us awake.



Associations: We can learn to connect things in our environment and we should aim to link our bed to the behaviour of sleeping. If we lie awake, scrolling through our phones, watching TV or playing computer games, our brains associate going to bed with such activities. In order to create the best conditions for sleep, we should do these things away from our beds.

Worries: When things play on our minds, they can prevent us from shutting down and relaxing in the evening. Where possible, it is helpful to deal with these worries before going to bed. Or, you could make a quick note of the problem, allowing you to come back to it at a better time.

If you are concerned about your own sleep, or that of someone else, you can ask your teacher or tutor for help and advice.

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