

Riding the sleep wave



SLEEP HELPS!

We sleep so we can be active, focused and well during the day. Almost everyone has had a bad nights sleep and knows what it feels like...

We now know more about how important sleep is for young people and why we need to respect it.

There are lots of myths about sleep, how much you need, what dreams mean, how our bodies can move or be active when you are actually asleep.

Everyone is different and our need for sleep changes over time. What's important is that you achieve a balance.

SO... what's the right balance for you?

How can you learn to take charge of sleep self-care? Read on...

What's your balance and how do you learn to get it right?

Puberty and Sleep...

The sleep of 12–25 year olds

Sleep is super important and it changes during adolescence.

As you progress through early, middle and late adolescence, natural hormones shift during this puberty phase of life and change your hormones and body clock.

It's normal to want to go to bed later than you used to. What's important is getting the right balance for you so you can be your best during the day, feel calm and manage your stress by including relaxation and sleep in your **self-care**.

Whilst the ideal amount of sleep will vary from person to person, if you find you are:

- > feeling tired in the mornings or after lunch
- > having difficulty concentrating and remembering things
- > feeling more irritable than usual
- > feeling less energetic

You're probably not getting enough sleep. Sleep deprivation can become like a vicious cycle that is often avoidable.

Our basic sleep / wake cycle impacts all aspects of our life. Sleep affects our physical health, our learning and concentration, our activity levels, emotions and relationships.

Relaxation Skills – coping with stress

Learning to relax is an important life skill and can help to improve your sleep.

It may sound simple, but learning to breathe in a calm and controlled way is an easy relaxation strategy that you can use before you go to bed or if you wake up in the night and find it hard to fall back to sleep.

Think waves, rhythmic sounds lapping on a beach... see it... breathe the sound out through your mouth... give it a go!

relax & breathe...

1. While sitting or lying down, make yourself as comfortable as possible
2. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Repeat this once.
3. Close your eyes. Focus your mind on breathing.
4. Breathe easily and gently with no effort.
5. Breathe in steadily over 3 seconds.
6. As you breathe out steadily over 3 seconds, say to yourself 'relax' while letting all your muscles go loose and floppy
7. Keep repeating this in a 6 second cycle (3 seconds in and 3 seconds out) over and over until you find yourself feeling calm and relaxed.

Long sleep-ins on the weekend to catch up on sleep make your body clock think you are jet lagged - and the effects can last for days.

Getting the balance right...

What helps & what doesn't?

What can prevent a good nights sleep?

- > **Loud music or TV, emails, homework, too much stress, trauma**
- > **Exercise right before sleep or feeling hungry**
- > **Computer screens left on** – they have a type of light that keeps you awake. Try shutting down the computer an hour before you want to sleep.
- > **Messed up body clock** – Different wake and sleep times and no routine
- > **Caffeine drinks** – Poor sleepers need less or no caffeine
- > **Nicotine and Alcohol** – Smoking tobacco is a stimulant and can make your dreams more vivid and make it harder to fall asleep. Alcohol does not help sleep – it can make you drowsy but the sleep you get is more likely to be disrupted and you'll wake up worse off.
- > **Medications & other Drugs**

What can PREVENT a good nights sleep?

FACT: When the amount of sleep you get varies a lot from day to day, it can cause poor sleep. Not sleeping right can cause more stress or moodiness – it can tip your balance and make you feel worse about yourself and others.

TIP: If you find yourself wanting to be in bed and sleeping too much of the day, get it checked out. See your GP or talk to your health care provider. For more general info visit the websites below:

Teenage sleep: Understanding and helping the sleep of 12 - 20 year olds at <http://eprints.vu.edu.au/467/>

> www.ybblue.com.au

> au.reachout.com

> www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

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What can HELP a good nights sleep? (self-care tips)

Create your own relaxing bedtime routine to program your body clock:

- > **Think Thermo-regulation** – thermo-regulation is about maintaining a constant body temperature, and to ensure a good night's sleep it's important to not be too hot or too cold
 - **Keep your feet at the right temperature** by putting on or taking off socks
 - **Have a warm drink** – milk contains a substance that can make you drowsy, and camomile tea can also help with sleep
- > **Create a sleep space that works for you** – less loud, less cluttered
- > **Do relaxing activities in order to wind down** – these might include reading or listening to music softly
 - a warm bath or shower can help to make you feel sleepy
- > **Turn off your computer an hour before you go to sleep**

Kick start your day:

- > **Wake up around the same time every day and catch the morning sun** – waking up with sunlight is important to restart your body clock and help your brain switch on
- > **Try to get out of bed when you wake up** rather than going back to sleep
- > **Get out in the fresh air and do some exercise** – this will help you to wake up and improve your sleep the next night

While you're out and about:

- > **Stay off caffeine after midday** – or if you're sensitive try to cut it out altogether
- > **Write a journal** to get out all the important thoughts, worries or events from the day
- > **Try not to nap unless you're tired** – if you do keep it short

Don't stress if you find yourself waking up in the night – it's actually pretty normal, and worrying about getting back to sleep will probably keep you up longer. Try to relax and wait for the next wave of sleepiness to arrive, and if you find yourself staring at the clock try turning it around.