

HEALTHY SLEEP HYGIENE GUIDELINES

1. **PRIORITISE YOUR SLEEP AND DEDICATE ENOUGH TIME FOR IT.**
2. **GO TO BED AND WAKE UP AT THE SAME TIMES EACH DAY.**
3. **CREATE A DARK, COOL, AND QUIET BEDROOM ENVIRONMENT.**
4. **AVOID BRIGHT LIGHTS OR SCREENS, ESPECIALLY AROUND BEDTIME.**
5. **IDEALLY, KEEP SCREENS OUT OF THE BEDROOM ALTOGETHER, PARTICULARLY AFTER LIGHTS OUT.**
6. **HAVE A REGULAR BEDTIME ROUTINE THAT INCLUDES RELAXING ACTIVITIES.**
7. **DON'T HAVE TEA, COFFEE, OR ENERGY DRINKS LATE IN THE DAY, AND AVOID HEAVY MEALS CLOSE TO BEDTIME.**
8. **TRY TO GET SOME EXERCISE EVERY DAY.**
9. **EXPOSE YOURSELF TO NATURAL SUNLIGHT EARLY IN THE DAY, IDEALLY BEFORE 10AM.**
10. **DON'T HAVE ANY NAPS AFTER 3PM.**

HEALTHY SLEEP HYGIENE GUIDELINES

1. PRIORITISE YOUR SLEEP AND DEDICATE ENOUGH TIME FOR IT.

Make time for sleep. Pick a bedtime that allows you to get the recommended amount of sleep for your age. Teens should be getting at least 8 hours of sleep.

2. GO TO BED AND WAKE UP AT THE SAME TIMES EACH DAY.

Being consistent can make a big difference to how much and how well you sleep. Set and keep to a sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. This does mean including weekends, if at all possible. At least avoid the temptation for giant lie-ins. Staying up very late at weekends and having big lie-ins will throw out your routine and make the next school week harder. If you really struggle with this, consider finding an activity that you have to get up early for at the weekend.

3. CREATE A DARK, COOL, COMFORTABLE, AND QUIET BEDROOM ENVIRONMENT.

Try to make your bedroom like a dark cave. Eliminate all the light you possibly can, including the LEDs on chargers and decorative lights or fairy lights. Make sure you have a mattress and pillow that suit you, and change your bedding regularly. Make your bed a cosy, appealing place. Try to organise blackout curtains or shades.

4. AVOID BRIGHT LIGHTS OR SCREENS, ESPECIALLY AROUND BEDTIME.

It's a good idea not to use bright overhead lights at nighttime. If possible, use side lights, table lamps or reading lamps that have softer or warmer bulbs. Try to dim even these lights an hour before bed and avoid screen use if you can. At the very least, sure you have a blue light filter on your phone and turns the screen brightness down. More so than any other light, blue light messes with your body's ability to prepare for sleep because it suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone that promotes feelings of sleepiness.

5. IDEALLY, KEEP SCREENS OUT OF THE BEDROOM ALTOGETHER, BUT PARTICULARLY AFTER LIGHTS OUT.

There are plenty of reasons to keep screens and phones out of your bedroom. It makes it easier to avoid their use when you should be transitioning to sleep. It also prevents checking your phone should you wake during the night. If you wake and use your phone, it will be far more difficult to fall back asleep. Also, phones are designed to get your attention. If you forget to put your phone in do-not-disturb mode, then messages, notifications, or updates are going to wake you. Phones are addictive of course, so if the idea of leaving it out of the bedroom causes you any anxiety, then all the more reason to do so. Make sure that you're in control of your phone and that it's not in control of you.

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6. HAVE A REGULAR BEDTIME ROUTINE THAT INCLUDES RELAXING ACTIVITIES.

This is really important. More on this in later slides.

7. DON'T HAVE TEA, COFFEE, OR ENERGY DRINKS LATE IN THE DAY, AND AVOID HEAVY MEALS CLOSE TO BEDTIME.

What you consume in the evening can affect your sleep. Cut back on caffeine from coffee, tea, or energy drinks, especially late in the day. Avoiding large meals before bed may also help to improve your sleep.

8. TRY TO GET SOME EXERCISE EVERY DAY.

Exercising each day provides a lot of benefits and will improve your sleep. Try for at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Avoid heavy exercising close to bedtime though, as this will make it hard for your body and brain to wind down.

9. EXPOSE YOURSELF TO NATURAL SUNLIGHT EARLY IN THE DAY, IDEALLY BEFORE 10AM.

Getting natural light early in the day helps make sure your internal clock is keeping good time and will help you to sleep better at night.

10. DON'T HAVE ANY NAPS AFTER 3PM.

A well-timed nap can help you feel more alert during the day and make up for lost sleep, but napping too late in the afternoon will make it difficult to fall asleep when bedtime rolls around. Experts recommend keeping naps to around 20 minutes and avoiding naps after around 3pm.

GOOD SLEEP ROUTINES

ROUTINES REALLY DO MATTER.

Research shows that people who follow bedtime routines are more likely to go to sleep earlier, take less time falling asleep, sleep longer, and wake up less during the night. A consistent routine also helps train your brain that it's time to get ready for bed.

Routines are different for everyone, so decide on your own, just remember that good sleep routines start well before lights-out. In fact, we can have wind-down routines, bedtime routines, and morning routines that will each help us get more sleep.

AN EXAMPLE WIND-DOWN ROUTINE - STARTS 60 MINUTES BEFORE BEDTIME.

1. Turn off the overhead lights in the house or in your room, turn on lamps instead.
2. Have a last check-in on your phone and put it on charge in the kitchen or hallway.
3. Get your bag sorted for the morning.
4. Take a shower or bath.
5. Make a bowl of cereal.
6. Do some nighttime skin care.
7. Check in with the family or watch an episode of TV with them.
8. Listen to some relaxing music.

AN EXAMPLE BEDTIME ROUTINE - STARTS 15-30 MINUTES BEFORE BEDTIME.

1. Brush your teeth
2. Change into pj's
3. Write in a journal
4. Set your manual alarm clock
5. Read a book in bed (sleep-friendly book light, not a ceiling light)
6. Listen to a calming podcast, audio book or meditation. (you can set a timer)
7. Lights out (get rid of every single bit of light from your room you possibly can)

RELAXING AND MEDITATING

SOME WAYS TO RELAX AND DE-STRESS BEFORE BED OR IN BED.

1. Guided and imagery meditation.
2. Breathing techniques.
3. Body-scan meditation.
4. Mindfulness meditation.
5. Journaling – write down your thoughts or worries.

ADDRESS THAT STRESS.

Practicing meditation is proven to reduce anxiety, improve sleep quality and even help with insomnia. Meditation puts you in the perfect mindset to drift off to sleep. There are many videos available online or in apps to help you and also some written guides. On the topic of writing, journaling is another great way to quiet your mind by getting your thoughts and feelings down on paper. Get yourself a journal to write in and avoid all the distractions of your phone or computer.

There are lots of great websites, apps, and podcasts where you can find great meditations for teens and sleep. Look for Guided and imagery meditation, Breathing techniques, body-scan meditation, mindfulness meditation, meditation for sleep.

www.mindfulnessforteens.com and mindfulnessercises.com might be good places to start.

SLEEP PLAN

Write out your own sleep plan. We're far more likely to succeed with a plan if we write it down in a few manageable steps.

A GOOD SLEEP PLAN CAN BE:

1. Identifying a time that you'd like to be asleep by.
2. Communicating with your family about your sleep goals.
3. Taking steps towards creating a better sleep environment.
4. Coming up with a routine that's all your own, include something relaxing to you.
5. Eliminating distractions.

If something is engaging your thoughts when you should be asleep, it's probably a distraction. Also if you want to try and bring your bedtime back a bit earlier it's best not to make a big jump, bring it back around 5 to 10 minutes a night at first.