



# Tips for a good night's sleep

Focusing on sleeping well can bring many positive benefits to our overall wellbeing. Good quality sleep is critical to both our physical and mental health and the effective functioning of our immune system. It also aids our emotional wellness and can have positive impacts on stress, depression, and anxiety.

You may have suffered from Insomnia before or had sleeping problems long-term, or perhaps you are experiencing difficulty with sleeping throughout the warm, summer months. The Sleep Foundation advises that the challenges which may cause an adverse effect to our sleep include:

- Disruption to our daily life and usual routines
- Anxiety and worry
- Depression and Isolation
- Family and Work stress
- Excess screen time
- Stress-related fatigue

### Understanding sleep:

Sleep expert Dr Lindsay Browning explains that sleep is controlled by our circadian rhythm, which is our internal 24 hour clock. This helps us be alert during the day and sleepy at night. It is usually regulated by daily cues such as exposure to daylight, when we eat our meals, when we exercise and other things. When we stay indoors for a long period of time, we lose many of these cues. For example, if we do not go outside to get daylight, we risk making our circadian rhythm less robust. Also, if we are not as physically active during the day and eating our meals at different times, our circadian rhythm may not know the difference between day and night as clearly. In addition, when we experience depression, this can be associated with insomnia (not sleeping well) or hypersomnia (sleeping too much).

### Establishing a routine:

It can be particularly difficult to maintain a routine during the summer months when the days get longer as there is a delay in melatonin release so our body clock is not receiving the signal that it is time to sleep until later in the evening. It is therefore really important to ensure that we establish a routine to give our bodies a sense of normality, which in turn can promote a consistent sleep schedule. Sleep-specific aspects of your daily schedule should include:

- **Wake-Up Time:** Set your alarm, avoid using the snooze button and have a fixed time to start each day.
- **Wind-Down Time:** This is an important time to relax and get ready for bed. It can involve things like light reading, stretching, and meditating along with preparations for bed like putting on pyjamas and brushing your teeth.
- **Bedtime:** Pick a consistent time to actually turn out the lights and try to fall asleep.





## Care first Webinar Article

### Follow these basic tips for getting a good night's sleep:

- **Keep your room temperature low** - Your bedroom should be kept for rest and sleep. It should be neither too hot, nor too cold, and as quiet and dark as possible. During summer, keep windows open throughout the day and blinds closed to keep your bedroom cool. Using lightweight fabrics such as thin pyjamas and bed sheets to keep you cooler throughout the summer months.
- **Reduce your exposure to light during the day** – helps your body prepare for sleep, particularly in the evening.
- **Darken your room before bed** – promotes a more peaceful sleep but you should ensure there is a bit of light in the mornings to allow your body clock to wake you up naturally.
- **Keep regular hours** - Going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time, all the time, will programme your body to sleep better.
- **Take more exercise (where possible)** - Regular exercise outside during the summer months can help with both your mental and physical state. You can go for walks or perhaps complete a home workout in the garden to relieve the day's stresses and strains. But not too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake!
- **Cut down on stimulants and avoid smoking** - such as caffeine in tea or coffee. in the evening. They interfere with falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Smokers take longer to fall asleep and wake up more often.
- **Don't over-indulge** - Too much food or alcohol, especially just before going to sleep, can play havoc with sleep patterns.
- **Try to relax before going to bed** - Listen to some quiet music or do some yoga to help relax your mind and body.
- **Make jobs lists** - Deal with worries or a heavy workload by making lists of things to be tackled the next day.
- **Switch off devices at least an hour before bed** - Many people are also affected by the blue light emitted from laptops, tablets and smartphones which can make it harder to get to sleep when used before bed.
- **If you can't sleep** - don't spend more than 20 minutes trying to get to sleep; get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy again – then go back to bed.

If you are experiencing problems sleeping and feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

### Useful links for more tips and information

- [www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk](http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk)
- <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/>
- <https://troublesleeping.co.uk/>

### More information

If you would like to view the Webinar on 'Tips for a good night's sleep', this is being delivered live on **Friday 26th January 2024** at **12pm**, please use the following link to register for this session –

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6238476580047717472>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.



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