

TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY SLEEP



A recent study shows that around **one third of adults** claim to have trouble sleeping and sleep problems are more common in women, children, and the elderly.

A sleep problem is a **lasting difficulty getting the right quality of sleep** to leave you able to function well during waking hours.

Sleep problems can be categorised under the following:

Getting to sleep: More commonly known as 'insomnia', this is lying awake instead of sleeping. Your difficulty might be you can't sleep during your regular sleeping hours but want to sleep during working hours instead.

Remaining asleep: Waking up during the night, having difficulty getting back to sleep, and/or waking up far earlier.

Quality of sleep: A constant feeling of tiredness no matter how many hours you sleep, or moving often during sleep.

Schedule of sleep: Sometimes sleep is possible, it is at times when everyone else is awake, this challenges your capacity function at work or otherwise lead a normal life.

BREAKFAST EVERY DAY



Eat breakfast within **30 - 45 minutes** of waking. This sends an important message to your brain that you are in a well-fed environment. This is **important for how you will sleep** at the end of that day.

It doesn't have to be a full meal, something small and nutritious is perfect.

STAY HYDRATED



It helps flush our systems of waste products and toxins. Sleep becomes **more refreshing** and you wake up more alert, energetic and **less likely to snooze**.

Start with 1 litre per day for 21 days then increase to 2 then 3 litres.

ELECTRONIC SUNDOWN



Switch off technology **1 hour before bed**. Any light can prevent melatonin levels from rising, which is needed to fall asleep and to reach **deep restorative sleep** your body requires.

Ask yourself 'do I really need to have this switched on?'

DON'T CHECK THE TIME



If you wake in the night, checking the time can be **very disruptive**. When you check your brain begins to calculate and assess, bringing up the **worries of the day** to come - leaving you wide awake.

If you can manage to resist checking you'll find it easier to go back to sleep.

WHITE NOISE



Sensitive sleepers may find white noise **stops them waking** at every little sound, It can be as simple as leaving a fan on. White noise can also make **falling asleep** in the first place easier.

Look online for other forms of white noise, tracks and apps can be found for free.

STIMULANTS



Nicotine, alcohol, caffeine & refined sugars all play a part in creating a **fatigue cycle & poor sleep**. If you drink a coffee or tea at 5pm, you still have half the caffeine in your blood at 10pm.

Stimulants disrupt the body chemistry that we need for good sleep.

EXERCISE & MOVEMENT



When we achieve a good level of movement & exercise during the day, **we sleep better**. Movement produces adenosine which is useful for stopping adrenaline **keeping us awake**.

Exercise can also help lose excess weight and improve our breathing.



Sleep affects both **mental and physical health**. High levels of sleeplessness expose people to risks ranging from the common cold to depression, dementia and a possible stroke or heart attack. The risk of obesity, cancer and diabetes is also increased.

Anyone getting **less than 7 hours rest a night** is at **heightened risk of damage to their physical or mental health**.

The UK loses **200,000 working days a year to absenteeism caused by lack of sleep**. Getting the right amount of sleep every night can reduce mortality, improve organisational effectiveness and save the UK economy between £26.5bn and £36bn (1.36%-1.86% of GDP) every year.



Sources:

- N. Ramlakhan (2010), *Tired but Wired*.
- D. Campbell (2018), *Britons told to get a good night's sleep*, theguardian.com.
- sleepcouncil.org.uk.