



# Sleep hygiene tips and tricks

Sleep hygiene is a term used to describe good sleeping habits, which are a vital part of our general health and wellbeing. Good quality sleep has a significant impact on our recovery, both physically and mentally, and is essential in preparing us for the day ahead. In this factsheet, you will find some tips on how to improve your sleep quality, as well as some educational and interactive resources to help along the way. Seek assistance from your GP if you continue to experience insomnia.



## Top tips for good sleep

- 1. Exercise!** There is so much research demonstrating the positive effects of regular exercise on sleep quality. Keep higher intensity exercise towards the start of the day and lower intensity exercise such as walking and yoga towards the end of the day; to enable the body to wind down at bedtime.
- 2. Avoid the following substances** for at least 4-6 hours before bed: Alcohol, Caffeine, Nicotine.
- 3. Routine:**
  - ◇ Train the body to go to sleep and wake at similar times each day.
  - ◇ Have a sleep ritual that trains your brain to sleep at a particular time e.g. after a 5-minute stretch routine or listening to relaxing music.
  - ◇ Keep your daily routine the same and don't avoid activities because of tiredness as this reinforces negative patterns.
- 4. Good Nutrition.** A healthy, balanced diet has a big impact on sleep quality. Avoid eating too much processed food and foods with high sugar content, as well as heavy meals before bed.
- 5. Minimise Screen Time before Bed**
  - ◇ Switch off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed
  - ◇ The blue light from screens can stop your brain from producing melatonin which assists with sleep.
- 6. Sleeping Environment**
  - ◇ Sleep at a comfortable temperature
  - ◇ Block out any light sources by using blinds or an eye mask
  - ◇ Keep the area you sleep in clean and use for sleeping and intimacy only, not for working or other tasks
  - ◇ Control noise by using earplugs if necessary
- 7. Avoid Napping**
  - ◇ This can inhibit your ability to fall asleep at night
  - ◇ If necessary, keep naps to 20-30 minutes long and before 3pm

## Sleep facts:

- ◆ Most healthy adults require 7-9 hours of sleep per night
- ◆ 33-45% of Australians have poor sleep patterns that lead to fatigue and irritability
- ◆ For every hour of sleep missed at night, there is a 14% increase in the risk of unpleasant emotions or feelings that affect day to day function
- ◆ Those that regularly sleep for less than 5 hours each night are more likely to experience long-term mental health issues

## Additional information:

- ◆ [headspace.org.au/assets/Factsheets/HSP225-Sleep-Fact-Sheet-DP3.pdf](https://headspace.org.au/assets/Factsheets/HSP225-Sleep-Fact-Sheet-DP3.pdf)
- ◆ [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sleep-hygiene](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sleep-hygiene)
- ◆ [sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene](https://sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene)
- ◆ [sleephealthfoundation.org.au](https://sleephealthfoundation.org.au)

### References:

Hirshkowitz, M et al. (2015). National Sleep Foundation's sleep time duration recommendations: methodology and results summary. *Sleep Health Journal*.