



SLEEP HYGIENE

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe good sleep habits. Obtaining healthy sleep is important for both physical and mental health, improving productivity and overall quality of life. Decades of research has led to the development of guidelines and strategies that can be used to enhance our quality of sleep. See some of these strategies below.

Have a consistent sleep-wake schedule

One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off! This regular rhythm will make you feel better and can help to establish a routine.

Sleep when you actually feel tired

Only try to fall asleep when you actually feel tired, rather than spending too much time awake while laying in bed. It is important to be in tune with our body and mind and be mindful of we require.

Avoid screens and stimulants

It is recommended to avoid screens and stimulants such as caffeine or nicotine before going to bed. Stimulants should be avoided within 4 to 6 hours before going to bed, while screens should be avoided 2 hours before. Screens and stimulants increase activity within the brain and can cause you to feel more alert and energised which will impact your ability to fall asleep.

If you cannot fall asleep, get up and try again

If you haven't been able to fall asleep within 20 minutes of laying in bed, get up and do something that is boring or calm until you feel tired enough to fall asleep. When you notice that you have become tired, go back to bed and try to fall asleep again. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting as this may wake you up even more.

Bed is for sleeping, nothing else

Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping, so that your body learns to associate bed with sleep. If you use your bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work and other things, your body will have difficulty establishing this association.

Avoid napping

Avoid taking naps during the day. This will help you to feel more tired at night time and will increase your chances of falling asleep. If you cannot make it throughout the day without a nap, be sure to limit and time your nap. Research suggests that a 20-minute power nap can help reduce tiredness and fatigue. Be sure to have your nap before 3pm.

Routines and rituals

Another way to train your mind and body to get ready to sleep is through having a consistent bed time routine and/or rituals. Developing your own routine and rituals tell your mind and body that you are getting ready for bed. You might choose to do some mindfulness practice, stretches or have a sequence of events such as washing yourself, brushing your teeth and preparing your bed.

Consider taking a bath or shower

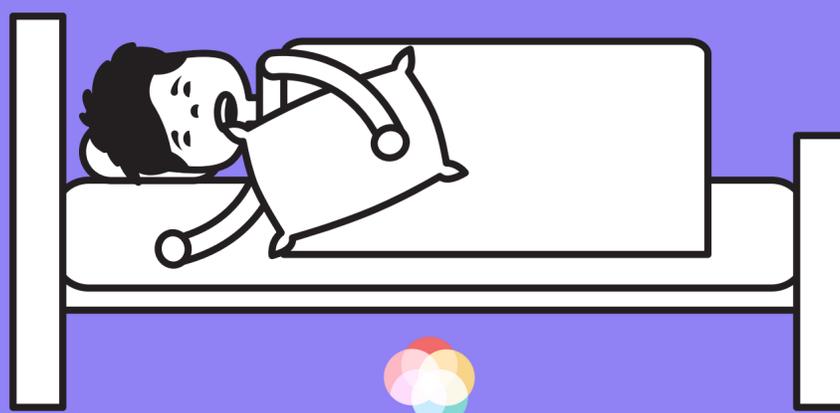
Research suggests that sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature. Having a hot shower or bath 1 to 2 hours before bed time can be helpful as it will raise your body's temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again.

Exercise

Incorporating daily exercise into your routine can help you feel more tired at night. Research suggests that daily exercise is associated with greater quality of sleep and better physical health.

Eat right

What we eat and when we eat can significantly impact our ability to fall asleep as well as they quality of our sleep. A well, balanced diet is important for maintaining good quality sleep and the timing of our meals is just as important. It is recommend to eat dinner at least 3 hours before going to bed for optimal sleep.





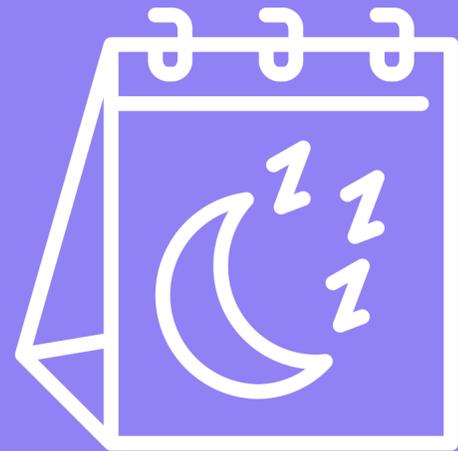
SLEEP DIARY

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Insufficient or interrupted sleep can have serious health consequences, but sleep problems aren't always easy to identify. For that reason, a sleep diary is a valuable tool for tracking sleep, monitoring sleep habits, and documenting sleeping problems. A sleep diary (also called a sleep log or journal) is a daily record of important sleep-related information.

Although not all sleep diaries are identical, they commonly include details about:

- Bedtime and/or lights-out time
- Wake-up time
- How long it takes to fall asleep
- The number and duration of sleep interruptions
- The number and duration of daytime naps
- Perceived sleep quality
- Consumption of alcohol, caffeine, and/or tobacco
- Daily medications
- Daily exercise



A sleep diary is an important tool for evaluating a person's sleep. While health professionals may request a sleep diary, some people may use one on their own accord.

By keeping a record of sleep, the diary makes it possible to calculate total sleep time (how many hours a person was asleep for). A sleep record also helps people identify sleep disruptions and other factors that can influence sleep quality. Identifying details about habits that affect sleep can show patterns that help explain sleeping problems.

SOLUTION PSYCHOLOGY'S SLEEP DIARY TEMPLATE:

Day/date	Pre Sleep Information						Bed/Sleep Information					
	Naps (what time & how long)	Medication (what & when)	Pre-bed activity (what did you do?)	Screen Time Off	Day time tiredness (0-5, 5 most tired)	In-bed activities	Lights out time	Time to fall asleep (minutes)	Waking time	Hours slept	Woke up (number of times, how long)	Quality of sleep (0-5, 5 best quality)
<i>Example</i>	<i>1pm for 45 minutes</i>	<i>Melatonin at 7pm</i>	<i>Watched TV after dinner for 2 hours</i>	<i>TV turned off at 6pm</i>	<i>3 - felt a bit tired today</i>	<i>Read for 20 minutes</i>	<i>8:30pm</i>	<i>Approx 40 mins</i>	<i>7.30am</i>	<i>11 hrs</i>	<i>Once at 3am for 10 mins</i>	<i>4 - good quality sleep</i>





BED SHARING & CO-SLEEPING

WHAT ARE THEY?

The terms co-sleeping and bed-sharing are often used interchangeably, however, they are two different things. Bed-sharing means sleeping in the same bed as your baby, or sharing the same sleeping surface.

Co-sleeping means sleeping in close proximity to your child, sometimes in the same bed and sometimes nearby in the same room (room-sharing). Both practices have their own sets of benefits and risks and it is a family's decision as to whether they co-sleep or share beds with other family members.

There are a number of factors that contribute to a child's reluctance to sleep independently such as fear and insecurity. It is important to explore potential underlying causes with your psychologist so that they can be addressed during treatment.



Caregivers often seek the advice of health professionals, including psychologists, when trying help their child sleep independently. Here are some things to consider when helping your child transition to sleeping independently:

Communication is Key

Include your child in the transition process. Start by talking to them about getting a bed in their own room or moving back to the bed that is in their room.

Parents should make it clear to their child what transitioning to their bed means and how the transition will occur. It may help to let your child pick out their own bed or their bedding as this can introduce some fun and excitement and can help them to maintain a sense of autonomy. Purchasing transitional objects may also be beneficial to help them self-soothe during the transition process.

Transition by Fading

Research suggests that bed-sharing and co-sleeping is most effectively extinguished when the presence of the caregiver is systematically faded. Caregivers are encouraged to break down to transition process into small achievable steps and reinforce their child's success at each step. Steps might include having your child sleep on a mattress next to your bed, then moving that mattress further away from the bed and eventually into their room. It is important not to rush through these steps.

Be Consistent

Like managing any other behaviour, being consistent is very important. Ensure that all people involved in the supervision and care of your child is aware of your transition plan. This will ensure that everyone is adhering to and implementing the same strategies. Discuss potential barriers and obstacles and how you plan to overcome them. For example, what will you do if your child crawls back into your bed in the middle of the night? How will you get them back to their bed? Having a plan to manage potential challenges will maintain consistency in the home.

