

Struggling to get a good night's sleep?



Do you battle with getting a good night's sleep? Just by ensuring you have a consistent sleep schedule and slightly improving your sleep habits can result in better sleep in the long run. There are many things that can cause your sleep to be disrupted and one of the biggest disruptions to good quality sleep is not having a set routine.

You can address many common sleep problems through lifestyle changes and improved sleep awareness. Although many of us don't have the luxury of getting more than six to eight hours of sleep each night, you can try to make the most of the sleep you do get.

Try these simple changes to your daytime and pre-bedtime routine:

- **Keep a sleep schedule that is as regular as possible.** Try and go to sleep and get up at the same time each day, including over the weekends and during holidays. The odd sleep-in is fine but don't let your body get out of sync with its normal routine.
- **Set aside enough time for sleep.** Most people need at least six to eight hours of sleep each night to function optimally the next day. If you compromise on the amount of sleep you get, you will start to battle with fatigue.
- **Keep your bedroom a cool temperature.** You get better quality sleep when your bedroom is cool. In warmer months, you may need to invest in a small fan to help circulate and cool the air in the room.
- **Your bedroom should be quiet.** Make sure that your family and friends know the hours that you sleep and so do not disturb you. Make sure any electrical devices that could make noise (cell phone, television, radio) are turned off or out of the room.
- **Avoid stimulating light before you go to sleep.** The type of light that electronic screens emit can stimulate your brain, suppress the production of melatonin (the hormone that regulates sleep), and interfere with your body's internal clock. Turn off all electronic equipment before bed.
- **Stop ingesting stimulants several hours before you go to bed.** Stimulants like caffeine found in coffee, tea, chocolate, and cocoa, and nicotine found in tobacco products will prevent you from having good quality sleep. Stop taking these at least four hours before you intend to sleep.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Although drinking might make you feel sleepy, it actually disrupts your sleep. If you do drink before you sleep, make sure you only have a maximum of one unit.

Sleep is important for your overall health and wellbeing. If you are experiencing difficulties sleeping, speak to your doctor.