



Tips for better sleep - Get the most out of your nightly rest

We are all familiar with the need to sleep, and how we should aim for 6-8 hours each night. Though most of us, at some point, have difficult nights and still feel tired, if not exhausted, the next day. The good news is that there are some simple hacks that can make a positive impact.

Why is sleep so important? As we rest at night, our body repairs and heals itself on a cellular level. There are well known reasons why not having enough sleep is bad for our health, such as a drop in our mental wellbeing, more at risk of heart disease and low immunity. (see <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/why-lack-of-sleep-is-bad-for-your-health/> for more information). Our bodies can't function at their optimum level if they haven't had a chance to heal at night. By continuing to have poor quality sleep, our mind, body and soul are thrown off balance and our quality of life can begin to suffer. It's important to be aware that some health conditions, such as sleep apnea, and medications, that can disrupt our sleep and/or cause fatigue, so it's important to see a doctor to discuss your concerns and rule out any possible underlying health issues.

What tips can make a difference? These habits that you form as part of your nightly routine are known as 'sleep hygiene'. If you have a good routine and have a good night sleep from it then it's considered good sleep hygiene. The great news is that these tips are really simple and can be implemented straight away!

- Set your environment - there really is something to the saying 'tidy room tidy mind'. A cluttered, unclean environment can makes us feel stressed. Have a clear out of what you haven't used in a while, open the windows to allow fresh air through, and give your room a thorough clean, which also helps remove stagnant energy. Consider using energy clearing techniques such as smudging, to help with negative energy.



- Check how your curtains and blinds are at keeping daylight out. Darkness causes our brains to release the hormone melatonin which helps us sleep. Though be sure to spend time out in the sun during the day. Not only do we gain vitamin D from sunlight, but it helps our body regulate sleeping patterns, and also helps with our brains release serotonin, a hormone that gives our mood a boost.
- Make your bed inviting. Comfort matters, so look at the different pillows available, and duvet thickness. Using attractive throws and cushions can also make your bed more cosy and appealing. Be sure to wash all bedding on a regular basis to kill bacteria and deter dust mites.
- Make your bed every morning. Not only is this a great way set the day on a positive note, it keeps your room looking tidy, and gives you a comfortable retreat at the end of the day.
- Have a nightly routine. Turn off electrics an hour before bed. The blue light from screens can keep you awake longer by causing your brain to delay the release of melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep. Plan a calming, mindful activity before bed, such as a bath, reading, meditating, journaling, or gentle exercise such as yoga (keep vigorous exercise to early in the day as this too can keep you awake for longer). Consider introducing the practise of gratitude too. Write down 3 things each night that you are grateful for from the day. This practice can have positive effects on the mind such as boosting mental wellbeing.
- Lastly, stick to going to bed and getting up at the same time each day. This gets the body into a rhythm where it will want to fall asleep easier.