

Sleep Resources

We all know that a poor night's sleep can make us feel groggy and cranky the next day, but what many people don't know is that an ongoing lack of restorative sleep can negatively affect work performance, stress relationships, and lead to mental health challenges. Most adults need eight to nine hours of sleep, but some need less and some need more. The problem for many people is that our busy lives make getting quality sleep difficult. With a few small lifestyle changes, adequate and good quality sleep can become the norm. For many people, stress and anxiety play a big part in their inability to get to sleep or to stay asleep. If you're finding it hard to wind down or switch off, here are a few tips to make the transition to restful sleep easier:

Transitioning to Bedtime

- Remove as many electronic devices as you can from your bedroom. There should be no beeps, beeps, or glowing lights in your sleep space.
- To avoid overstimulation, keep the lights low.
- Don't exercise before bedtime. Although regular exercise during the day can help you sleep better, exercising too near to bedtime can have a stimulating effect.
- Be kind to your stomach in the evening. Digestion is less efficient and slower at night than in the daytime and the stomach is less protected from the effects of acidic, spicy, or fatty foods. Be kind to your stomach when eating at night or you may experience indigestion and heartburn.
- Don't watch the clock. Watching the minutes tick by will not help you sleep. Turn your clock around at bedtime so you cannot see it.
- If something is worrying you enough to keep you awake, try writing it down. It helps to describe how you feel or to make a list of the things that you need to do or that are on your mind.

Tips for a Good Night Sleep

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day — including weekends.
- Try to eat small frequent meals and avoid high fat food and sugary snacks in the evening.
- Keeping physically active. The value of physical fitness cannot be overstated. In addition to energizing you, regular physical activity enhances cardiovascular fitness and muscle tone, improves your ability to manage stress and therefore improves sleep.
- Be smart about napping. While taking a nap is a great way to recharge — especially for older adults — it can make insomnia worse. If insomnia is a problem for you, consider eliminating napping. If you must nap, do it in the early afternoon and limit it to 30 minutes.
- Try closing your eyes and listening to gentle music.
- Some people find aromatherapy helpful, or filling pillows with lavender, lotus, rose or geranium.

Sleep Diary

A first step to improving your sleeping habits is to track and understand what they are. Below you will find a helpful sleep-tracking diary. Using this sheet, you track your sleep habits, so that you can determine what you need to do to improve your sleep or to discuss the results with your physician. You can find the sleep diary through the Hamilton Sleep Disorders Clinic [here](#).

Sleep Resources

Homewood Health

- Homewood empowers you with the information and support you need to find your way to a healthy sleep cycle. They make it simple to get started and guide you step-by-step.
- Are you a shift worker? Homewood can help you [find solutions](#) to your unique challenges.

Canadian Sleep Society

- Get information about [sleep and sleep disorders](#), find [books on sleep](#) authored by Canadian experts, and get current scientific and clinical developments concerning the screening, diagnosis, and management of [insomnia](#).