

## HEALTHY HABITS AND SLEEP

Your behaviours during the day, and especially before bedtime, can have a major impact on your sleep. They can promote healthy sleep or contribute to sleeplessness.

Your daily routines – what you eat and drink; the medications you take; how you schedule your days and how you choose to spend your evenings – can significantly impact your quality of sleep. Even a few slight adjustments can, in some cases, mean the difference between sound sleep and a restless night.





## Healthy habits all day long

# IT'S WHAT YOU DO ALL DAY

Give it a go...

Most people believe that having a good night's sleep is about what we do before we go to bed. Whilst having a good bedtime routine will help, creating healthy habits all day long will be even more effective for positive sleep patterns.

The key to healthy habits is to do things that are easy and become part of your everyday routine.

For example, if you want to exercise more, joining a gym and committing to three classes a week can seem a big task. Instead, try walking somewhere a few times a week, rather than driving. Making new habits easy and part of a routine you already have, means you are more likely to stick to them.

### HEALTHY HABITS ALL DAY

Setting you up for quality sleep is an all-day affair. There are few things that can help:

**See the light of day:** Our internal clocks are regulated by light exposure. Try to take in daylight by getting outside or opening up windows or blinds to get natural light. Getting a dose of daylight early in the day can help normalize your circadian rhythm.

**Increase daily activity:** This has a whole load of health benefits; it initiates energy *and* promotes sleep. If you're on playground duty, join in with the games. In PE, don't just describe those bunny hops - get deep down and do them.

**Try not to do strenuous activity** at least two hours before bed.

**Monitor your caffeine intake:** It's tempting to use caffeine to try to overcome daytime sleepiness, but that approach isn't sustainable and can cause long-term sleep deprivation. A little is okay, but keep an eye on your caffeine intake and avoid it later in the day.

**Be mindful of alcohol:** It can induce drowsiness, so some people are keen on a nightcap before bed. Unfortunately, alcohol affects the brain in ways that can lower sleep quality. For that reason, it's best to avoid alcohol in the lead up to bedtime. Mostly!

**Eat a couple of hours earlier:** It can be harder to fall asleep if your body is still digesting a big dinner. If you need an evening snack, opt for something light and healthy.

**Eat 45 minutes after waking up:** This helps regulate your serotonin levels and brings down dopamine, which is used by your body to wake you. If you can't eat much, try a couple of nuts and a bite of a banana or a smoothie with good stuff in.

**Reserve your bed for sleep and sex only:** You want a strong positive mental association between your bed and sleep, so try to keep other activities, such as watching TV, to other rooms.

Keep a sleep diary  
<https://bit.ly/3oFXUFU>

Put your phone out of your bedroom when you sleep, to avoid looking at it first thing in the morning. This will give your brain a chance to settle and produce calming chemicals, rather than eject you mentally into your day and increase stress levels as soon as you wake up.

**Try relaxation techniques:** Don't focus on trying to fall asleep. Instead, focus on controlled breathing, mindfulness meditation, progressive muscle relaxation and guided imagery. There are great apps that can help with this, such as 'Headspace'.

<https://bit.ly/35JwI0D>

Healthy habits all day long create healthy sleep all night long

1. Eat within 45 minutes of waking up
2. Don't reach straight for your phone
3. Decrease caffeine and increase water
4. Have regular tech breaks throughout the day
5. Stay active throughout the day and get sunlight

