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Event

# Member Webinar



Welcome To Sleep School



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## About Me

Passionate about supporting individuals become more effective, fulfilled, happier and healthier in their personal and professional life.

# Hands up if you

Often wake up in the mornings feeling more tired than when you went to bed?

Regularly wake up during the night for no apparent reason?

Have trouble getting off to sleep in the first place?

Improving sleep is a universal concern.



# Getting Better Sleep

- 01** What is good sleep & why it's so important
- 02** Sleep disruptors & impact
- 03** Understanding the sleep cycle
- 04** How to improve the quality of your sleep
- 05** Reflection & action steps

# What Is A Good Night's Sleep?

**A good night sleep** is characterised by

both quantity and quality of sleep, during which your mind and body rest and recuperate, ready for whatever the next day brings.

These factors together contribute to what is scientifically considered a good night's sleep, promoting overall health and well-being.



**Scientifically**, a good night's sleep involves factors such as

### **Duration**

The amount of sleep an individual gets.

### **Sleep Quality**

The ease of falling asleep, staying asleep, and waking up feeling refreshed and alert.

Good sleep quality means fewer awakenings during the night and an appropriate amount of deep and REM sleep .

### **Sleep Cycles**

A good night's sleep includes 4-6 sleep cycles, each lasting about 90 minutes.

### **Circadian Rhythms**

Alignment with natural circadian rhythms is essential. Disruptions to these rhythms can impair sleep quality and overall health.



# Why It's So Important



# A Good Night's Sleep is important for our overall health

## **Cognitive Function**

Memory consolidation, problem-solving, and creativity.

It rejuvenates your mind and allows it to process information.

## **Emotional Regulation**

Mood stability and resilience.

It gives your brain a much-needed break from the stresses of the day.

## **Physical Health**

Muscle repair, immune function, and growth.

# Sleep Disruptors

# Sleep Disruptors

Inability to switch off/Stress

Exceeding our physical, mental, emotional capacity

Alcohol

Caffeine

Food intake – what and when

Children waking

Snoring partner

Irregular sleep patterns/jetlag/shiftwork

Environment – noise – light

Technology

Medical conditions, such as insomnia, sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome

Be mindful of over the counter medications

# Naps

Long naps can make you feel groggy and impair your concentration.

If you take a nap, do so in the early afternoon.

Ideally 45 minutes - 2.5 hours max otherwise this will completely disrupt your sleep routine.

However, short naps can boost your energy and help you perform at your best throughout the day.

Research has shown that afternoon naps can help improve work productivity.

Organisations such as Google and the Huffington Post provide rooms where team members can rest for this very reason!



# Sleep Disorders

If you suspect a sleep disorder

(e.g. sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome), consult a healthcare provider.

Proper diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders can significantly improve sleep quality and overall health.

# What Is A Good Night's Sleep?

### **Feeling Rested and Alert**

Upon waking, you should feel refreshed and alert. If you wake up groggy or remain tired throughout the day, it may indicate poor sleep quality.

### **Energy Levels**

Consistently high energy levels throughout the day, without the need for excessive caffeine or stimulants, suggest good sleep.

### **Mood Stability**

Good sleep contributes to emotional stability. If you notice improved mood, reduced irritability, and overall emotional well-being, it's a sign of adequate sleep.

## **Cognitive Function**

Good sleep enhances cognitive functions like memory, concentration, and decision-making. If you find yourself thinking clearly and processing information effectively, it's a positive sign.

## **Physical Health**

Good sleep promotes physical health. Look for signs like reduced muscle soreness, better digestion, and improved immune function.

## **Sleep Patterns**

Regular sleep patterns, including falling asleep within 20 minutes and having minimal awakenings during the night, indicate good sleep. Using a sleep tracker can help monitor these patterns.



# Signs You're Not Getting Enough Sleep

- Persistent fatigue and drowsiness during the day
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering things
- Mood disturbances, such as irritability or depression
- Frequent illness due to a weakened immune system
- Falling asleep quickly when you go to bed (within 5 minutes)



Did you know one in three of us  
don't get enough sleep?



# Impact Of Sleep Deprivation

You may experience a number of **health challenges** including flu, hypertension, diabetes, dementia, heart disease, have trouble maintaining a healthy weight because a lack of sleep impairs your body's ability to regulate the hormones associated with appetite and even cancer.

Chronic lack of sleep can affect your health, your memory, and your ability to focus.



# How Much Sleep Do I Need?

**The National Sleep Foundation** provides the following recommendations

for nightly sleep duration based on age:

Newborns (0-3 months): 14-17 hours

Infants (4-11 months): 12-15 hours

Toddlers (1-2 years): 11-14 hours

Preschoolers (3-5 years): 10-13 hours

School-age children (6-13 years): 9-11 hours

Teenagers (14-17 years): 8-10 hours

Young adults (18-25 years): 7-9 hours

Adults (26-64 years): 7-9 hours

Older adults (65+ years): 7-8 hours

# How Much Sleep Do I Need?

Remember, individual sleep needs can vary.

Some people may feel well-rested with slightly less sleep, while others may need more than the recommended amount to function optimally.

Studies show that adults who get seven to eight hours a day have lower mortality rates, and tend to be healthier, than those who have more or less than this amount.

# Sleep Cycles

## **Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) Sleep**

### **Stage 1**

Light sleep, transition between wakefulness and sleep. Usually about 10 minutes

### **Stage 2**

Deeper sleep, body temperature drops, heart rate slows. 30 – 60 minutes

### **Stage 3**

Deep sleep, essential for physical restoration.

## **Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Sleep**

Dreaming stage, essential for cognitive functions like memory and learning.

# How To Improve Your Sleep

## Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is the management of all behavioural and environmental factors that precede and may interfere with sleep

1. Track your sleep
2. Circadian rhythm
3. Diet
4. Exercise
5. Alleviate stress
6. Technology
7. Establish a routine
8. Create the right environment

# 1. Sleep Diary

1. Evaluate how well you are sleeping at the moment.
2. Note how many hours you slept and how rested you felt in the morning.
3. How much exercise or relaxing activities you did.
4. Stress you have encountered.
5. What you ate and drank during the day.
6. Record bedtime, wake-up time, number of awakenings, and subjective sleep quality of sleep can help identify patterns and issues.



*If you do find your sleep problems needs medical attention, diary details can give your medical adviser full information on which to base their recommendations.*



# 1. Sleep Trackers

Smartwatches, fitness bands and apps can track your sleep stages, duration, and interruptions.

Analysing this data can provide insights into your sleep quality.

(not very accurate, use for fun/curiosity)



## 2. Circadian Rhythm

Our natural circadian rhythm (our 24 hour internal body clock) responds to natural daylight and darkness.

Natural daylight stimulates the hormone melatonin, which makes you feel sleepy. Aim to get at least two to three hours each day, and this will help you fall asleep at night.



<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/circadian-rhythm>

**Melatonin** is a hormone that regulates sleep-wake cycles and is naturally produced by the pineal gland in the brain.

It is also available in various foods and supplements.

Melatonin supplements can be helpful for regulating sleep-wake cycles, particularly for adjusting to new time zones or correcting circadian rhythm disturbances



# Daylight and Melatonin Production

## **Exposure to Light**

### **Blue Light and the SCN**

The presence of blue light (which is abundant in daylight) is detected by the retina in the eye. This information is transmitted to the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) in the brain, which is the primary circadian pacemaker.

### **Inhibition of Melatonin**

When daylight, especially blue light, is present, the SCN signals the pineal gland to suppress melatonin production, making you feel more alert and awake.

### **Reduction of Light**

As daylight decreases towards the evening, the reduction in light signals the SCN to allow the pineal gland to start producing melatonin. This hormone helps signal to the body that it's time to prepare for sleep.

# Optimising Sleep

## **Morning Light Exposure**

Encouraging exposure to natural daylight in the morning can help reset the circadian rhythm. This ensures that melatonin production is suppressed during the day and begins at the appropriate time in the evening, leading to better sleep quality.

## **Avoiding Evening Light Exposure**

Minimising exposure to artificial blue light from screens and other sources in the evening helps in the natural increase of melatonin production, promoting better sleep onset.

## **Daytime Alertness**

By regulating melatonin production through controlled light exposure, individuals can maintain higher alertness and cognitive function during the day.



# Using Light Therapy

## **Light Boxes**

For those who have difficulty getting natural light exposure, light therapy boxes that emit blue light can be used in the morning to simulate daylight and help regulate melatonin production.

## **Circadian Rhythm Adjustment**

Light therapy can be especially useful for adjusting to new time zones (e.g., for travel) or for shift workers who need to realign their circadian rhythms.



## 4. DIET

### **Avoid Stimulants**

Reduce caffeine and nicotine intake, especially in the afternoon and evening. Caffeine stays in your system for up to 12 hours. Stimulants delay sleep onset and reduce sleep quality.

### **Alcohol**

Have alcohol in moderation. Alcohol can help you fall asleep but it can disrupt sleep cycles and reduce sleep quality.

Don't drink too much alcohol without also drinking some water before going to bed, as dehydration can cause headaches and keep you awake.



## 4. DIET

Nutrient-rich diets support better sleep patterns . If you need to eat before bed time, try simple, bland foods which are rich in tryptophan, a sleep-inducing hormone, melatonin and magnesium. Avoid eating large meals before sleeping. In particular, spicy and acidic foods can cause heartburn, which makes it more difficult to sleep well.

A light snack, however, may satisfy your hunger before bed, and allow you to sleep. Eat foods that are low in sugar, such as bananas, or wholegrain cereal with milk, yogurt or granola.





**Tryptophan** is an essential amino acid that plays a key role in the production of serotonin.

A neurotransmitter that can influence sleep, mood, and behaviour.

# Magnesium

helps regulate the body's production of melatonin, the hormone that controls sleep-wake cycles. Adequate levels of magnesium supports the body's natural production of melatonin, thereby promoting healthy sleep patterns.

Magnesium helps activate gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) receptors in the brain. GABA is a neurotransmitter that has a calming effect on the nervous system. By enhancing GABA activity, magnesium can help reduce brain activity and promote relaxation, making it easier to fall asleep.

Magnesium acts as a natural muscle relaxant. It helps to reduce muscle tension and cramps, which can interfere with sleep.

It plays a role in regulating the stress response. It can help reduce levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, and improve the function of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for promoting relaxation.

Magnesium supplements can help promote relaxation and improve sleep quality.

## 4.Diet

### **Kiwi**

Rich in serotonin and antioxidants, both of which can improve sleep quality and duration.

### **Cherries**

Cherries, particularly tart cherries, are one of the few natural sources of **melatonin**.

### **Bananas**

Bananas also contain potassium and **magnesium**, which help relax muscles and carbohydrates that can help **tryptophan** reach the brain.





## Turkey & Chicken

Turkey is high in **tryptophan**.

## Fatty Fish

Fish like salmon, tuna, and mackerel are high in vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids, both of which are important for regulating serotonin and enhancing sleep.

**Eggs**, Soy Products – tofu, soy milk, and edamame

## Dairy products

Milk contains **tryptophan** and **melatonin**



## Herbal Teas

Teas such as peppermint and valerian root are known for their calming effects.

## Chamomile Tea

Chamomile tea contains antioxidants that may promote sleepiness and reduce insomnia by calming nerves and muscles.



# Natural Sleep Aids

## **Melatonin**

A hormone that regulates sleep-wake cycles. It is available as an over-the-counter supplement and is commonly used to treat insomnia and jet lag.

## **Valerian Root**

A herbal supplement that has been used for centuries to treat sleep disorders. It may help reduce the time it takes to fall asleep and improve sleep quality.

## **Chamomile**

A herb often consumed as tea. It contains antioxidants that bind to certain receptors in your brain that promote sleepiness and reduce insomnia.

## **Lavender**

Often used in aromatherapy, can promote relaxation and improve sleep quality.

Lavender oil can be used in a diffuser, or lavender tea can be consumed before bedtime.

## **Ashwagandha**

An adaptogenic herb that can help the body manage stress and promote relaxation, potentially improving sleep quality.



## **Passionflower**

A herb used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders. It may increase the production of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a brain chemical that helps reduce brain activity and promote sleep.

## **L-Theanine**

An amino acid found in tea leaves, particularly green tea. It promotes relaxation and can help improve sleep quality.

## **Glycine**

Glycine is an amino acid that can improve sleep by lowering body temperature and signaling the brain to prepare for sleep.

***Always consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new supplement, especially if you have underlying health conditions or are taking other medications.***

## 5. Exercise

Engage in moderate exercise most days of the week.

This improves sleep quality and reduces sleep onset latency.

This will help to reduce stress and raise your mood.

Late-night exercise can increase arousal and delay sleep onset.



## 6. Stress

It's important to feel relaxed before you go to sleep.

Write down any sources of stress before your bedtime.

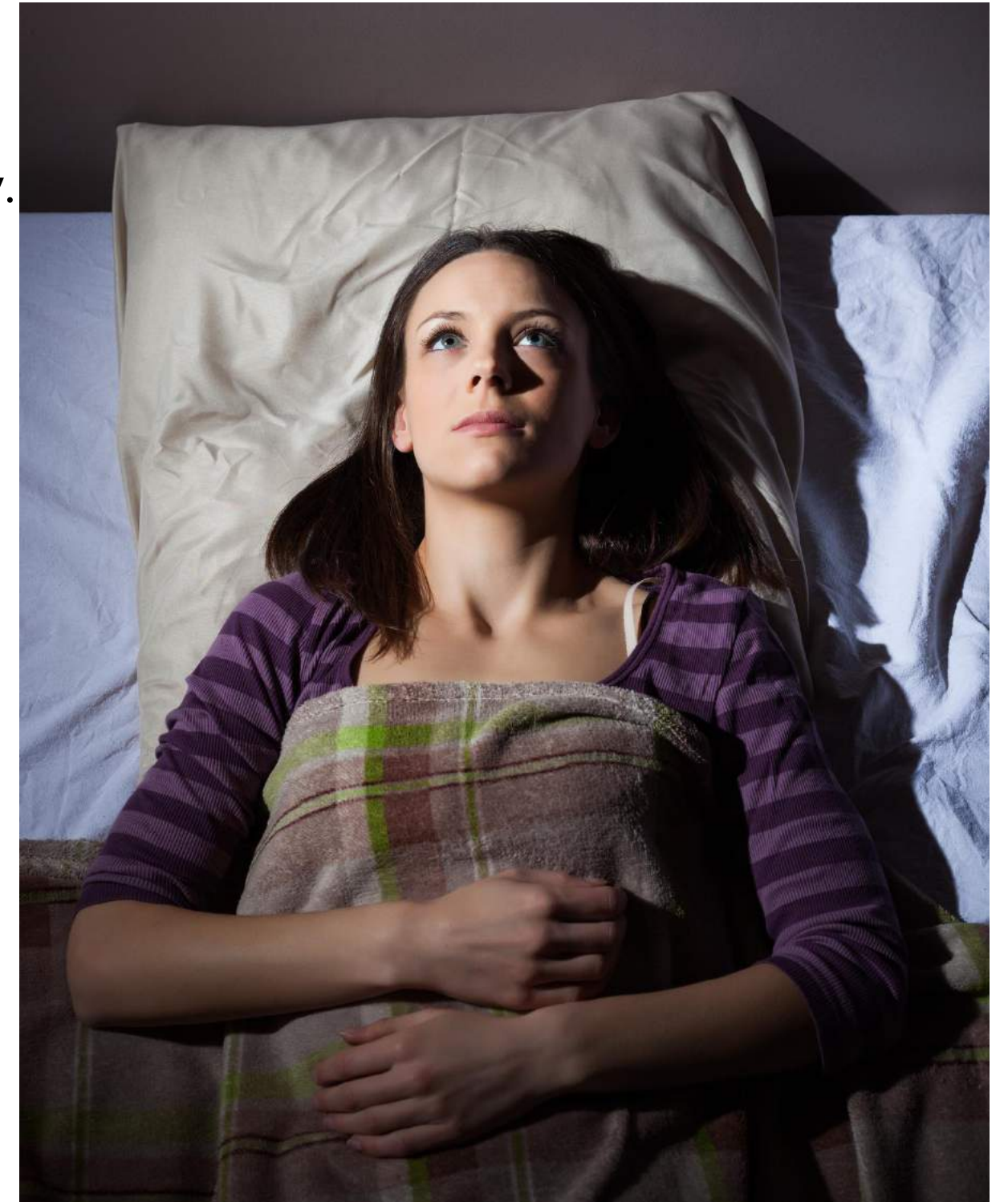
If you have a To-Do List, cross off what you've accomplished that day.

Write down the tasks you need to do the next day.

Relaxation techniques reduce stress and improve sleep quality.

Practice mindfulness, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga or deep-breathing exercises.

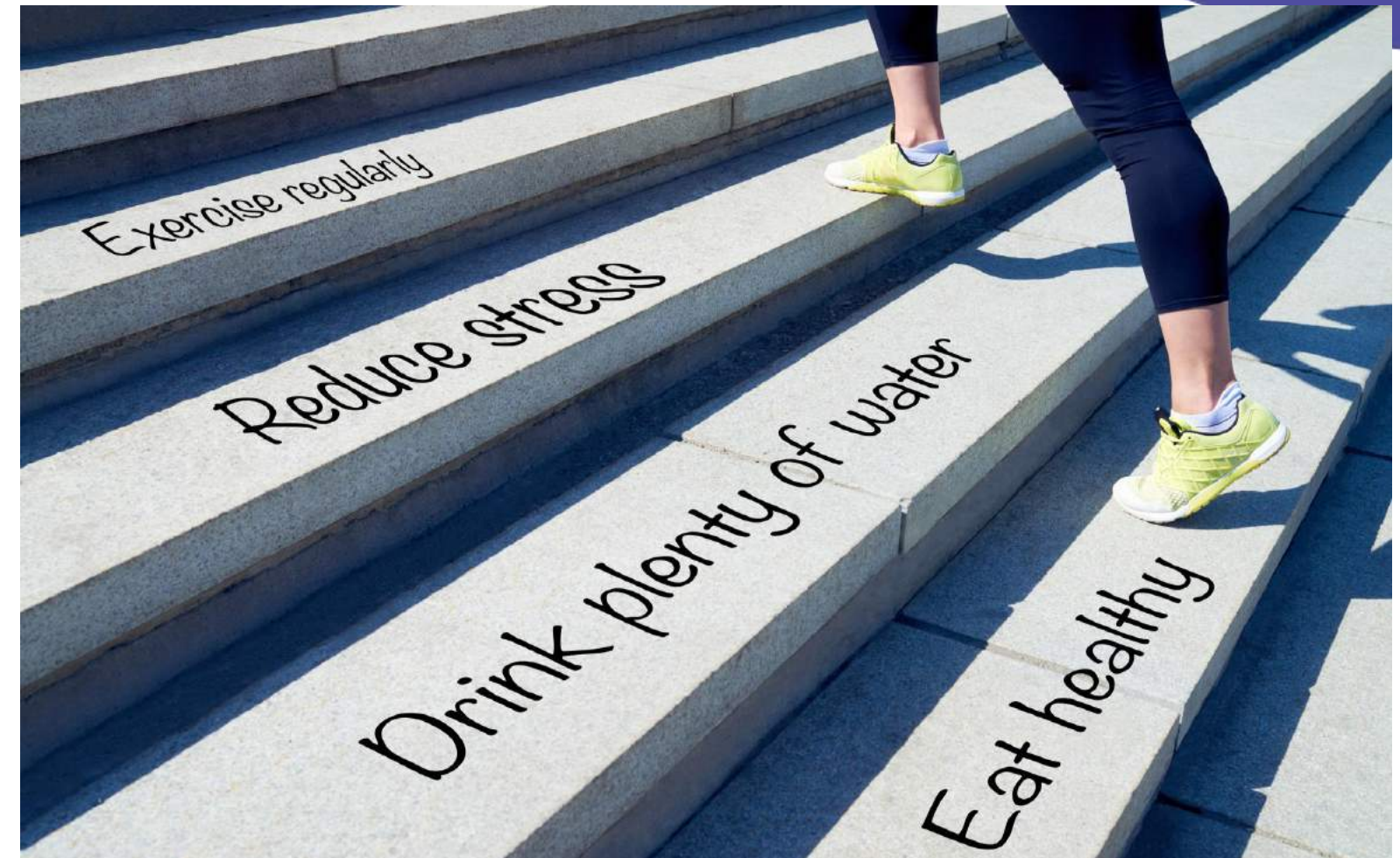
If you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep, **avoid putting on a very bright light** as this will make the brain think that it is time to get active. Get out of bed and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy again.



## 6. Stress

### **Consider Life Circumstances**

Stress, physical activity, and overall health can affect how much sleep you need.



## 7. Technology

Avoid using your smart phone or tablet in bed.

Apply a screen filter to take out the stimulating blue light two hours before bed. Blue light from screens inhibits melatonin production, disrupting sleep.

Screens are addictive and keep us alert.



## 8. Routine

Maximise your 'sleep efficiency' by sticking to a regular schedule.  
Try going to bed and waking up at about the same time each day.

This will help program your brain to expect sleep at a certain  
Time and will allow your body to settle into a regular sleep  
routine.

You'll also find that you begin waking naturally at the same time  
each morning.

Don't go to bed until you feel sleepy, and don't stay in bed if  
you are not sleeping.



## 8. Routine

A couple of hours before bedtime, begin to allow yourself to wind down.

A regular evening ritual, such as a warm bath, meditation or reading for half an hour, can help you relax and will signal to your body that it is time to rest.



## 9. Environment

Avoid using your bedroom as a place to work or watch TV.

If you use your bed exclusively for sleeping, your mind and body will recognise that means it's time to sleep.

Ensure that the room is cool, dark and free from distractions.

Comfortable bedding improves sleep and reduces disturbances.





## 9. Environment

Listen to music or talk radio very low so that it eventually just becomes background noise.

Listen to white or brown noise for 20 mins or more before sleep.

Use calming scents such as lavender or chamomile oil

Use low-wattage lightbulbs or ensure it's completely dark when you turn out the light.

Consider investing in blackout curtains, or wearing an eye mask.

If you have to get up during the night, don't turn on your main lights, as this will wake you up fully. Use a side lamp instead.



If you have more serious difficulties sleeping or are constantly tired, you may have underlying health challenges or a sleep disorder that requires medical attention.

If you are concerned about your sleep challenges, you should consult a medical expert.



# Sleep Support in Ireland

## Irish Sleep Society (ISS)

Provides information on sleep disorders, research, and resources for both patients and healthcare professionals.

[Irish Sleep Society](#)

## Consult Your GP

Primary care physicians can provide initial assessments and referrals to sleep specialists.

## **Sleep Clinics**

Specialised clinics offer comprehensive evaluations and treatments for sleep disorders

St. James's Hospital Sleep Disorder Clinic, Dublin.

Beaumont Hospital Sleep Disorder Clinic, Dublin.

## **HSE Services**

The Health Service Executive (HSE)

## **Support Groups**

Local support group can provide community and shared experiences.

Check with local community centers or hospitals.

## **Workshops and Seminars**

Look for sleep health workshops offered by local health organisations or wellness centers.

## **Sleep Disorders**

The web site [www.sleepeducation.org](http://www.sleepeducation.org) explains sleep disorders.

## **Sleep Apnea**

If you suspect sleep apnea, seek professional evaluation and treatment, such as CPAP therapy.

## **Insomnia**

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is highly effective. CBT-I is considered the first-line treatment for chronic insomnia .

## **Restless Leg Syndrome and Other Disorders**

Proper diagnosis and treatment are essential. Consult with a sleep specialist.

## Online Resources and Apps

### Sleepio

An evidence-based digital sleep improvement program using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I).

[Sleepio](#)

### Calm

Offers guided meditations, sleep stories, and relaxation techniques.

[Calm](#)

### Headspace

Provides mindfulness and meditation exercises specifically designed to improve sleep.

[Headspace](#)

## **Educational Resources**

### **Books and Guides**

"Why We Sleep" by Matthew Walker

"The Sleep Solution" by W. Chris Winter

### **Webinars and Online Courses**

Look for educational programs offered by health organizations or universities.

### **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques**

Practice mindfulness, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation.

### **Mindfulness Ireland**

Offers resources and courses on mindfulness practices.

# Reflect & Review

What are your biggest insights from our webinar today?

What will you do differently to improve the quality of your sleep?





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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS?

*Ask Away!*

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