SLEEP

Your physical and emotional health depends so much on how rested you are. Sleep is fundamental to a healthy mind and body – getting a good night's sleep can make a huge difference in your overall health.
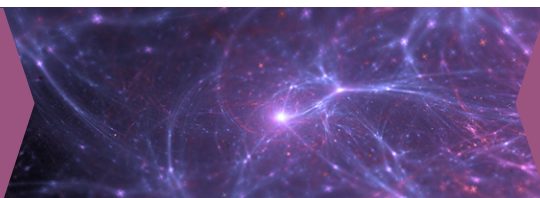
SLEEP AFFECTS THE ENTIRE BODY

It plays a role in our moods, ability to learn and make memories, the health of our organs, how well our immune system works, and other bodily functions like appetite, metabolism, and hormone release.

SLEEP IS IMPORTANT DOWN TO THE CELLULAR LEVEL

Sleep helps the body to re-energize its cells.

It also increases the amount of space between brain cells to allow fluid to flow and clear away toxins.[1]

HOW MUCH SLEEP SHOULD YOU BE GETTING?

If you get approximately 8 hours each night, you'll spend about 1/3 of your life asleep. Based on the average U.S. life expectancy[2], that is 230,680 hours or 26.3 years of sleep in a lifetime.

The amount of sleep you need each night depends on your age. The National Sleep Foundation recommends:[3]

NEWBORNS (0-3 MONTHS)	14-17 HOURS	
INFANTS (4-11 MONTHS)	12-15 HOURS	
TODDLERS (1-2 YEARS)	11-14 HOURS	
PRE-SCHOOLERS (3-5 YEARS)	10-13 HOURS	

9-11 HOURS	SCHOOL CHILDREN (6-13 YEARS)	
8-10 HOURS	TEENS (14-17 YEARS)	
7-9 HOURS	ADULTS (18-64 YEARS)	
7-8 HOURS	OLDER ADULTS (65+ YEARS)	

QUALITY OF SLEEP MATTERS

Good quality sleep means:[4]

Being asleep for at least 85% of the time you are in bed

Falling asleep in 30 minutes or less

Waking up no more than once per night for no longer than 20 minutes

When a person consistently struggles to get enough sleep or good quality sleep, they have a higher risk for health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity.[5]

Poor quality of sleep can increase the risk of developing mental health symptoms like: manic episodes[6], a first episode of psychosis[7], paranoia[8], anxiety[9], and depression.[10]

Sleep problems affect 50% to 80% of people under the care of a psychiatrist, compared with 10% to 18% of adults in the general U.S. population. [11]

Among visitors to mhascreening.org who scored moderately to severely depressed, 95% reported trouble falling asleep or sleeping too much at least several days in the past month.[12]

TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—including weekends. This helps to keep your body's natural rhythms running on schedule.

Avoid exercising 2-3 hours before your bedtime. Try to exercise in 30 minute sessions either in the morning or afternoon.

Get out in the sun - getting natural sunlight during the day helps to maintain your body's sleep-wake cycle. Aim for 30 minutes of sun exposure and be sure to wear sunscreen.

Limit caffeine to the morning. The energy-boosting effects of caffeine can take as long as 8 hours to wear off.

Don't eat right before bed - it can cause indigestion and heartburn, which can mess up sleep.

Nap smart. If you need a nap, take it before 3 p.m. and limit it to an hour.

If you can't fall asleep for more than 20 minutes after going to bed, get up and do something calming until you feel sleepy.

Say no to nicotine. The nicotine in tobacco products and vapes is a stimulant, which can keep you up at night.

See a doctor if you always feel tired even after getting enough sleep, or have trouble falling asleep every night.

Some over-the-counter and prescription medications may affect your ability to go to sleep or cause you to sleep for longer than necessary. If you can't avoid medications, talk to your doctor.

Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, like noises or bright lights. The light from screens can confuse your body's internal clock.

Go easy on the drinks. Drinking too much before bed can make you wake up to go to the bathroom and alcohol gets in the way of reaching the deep and restful stages of sleep.

TAKE THE #4MIND4BODY CHALLENGE!

Join Mental Health America this May as we challenge ourselves each day to make small changes – both physically and mentally – to create huge gains for our overall fitness. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram for the challenge of the day and share your successes by posting with #4mind4body.

If you are taking steps to live a healthy lifestyle but still feel like you are struggling with your mental health, visit www.mhascreening.org to check your symptoms. It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, we'll give you information and help you find tools and resources to feel better.

For more information on personal well being, visit the navigating life's journey blog at www.uaex.edu/nlj

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