



A guide to better sleep

Recently, increased attention has been given to the importance of sleep as a major factor that has a significant impact on all aspects of our lives. Sleep deprivation - that is, sleep that is lacking in quantity, quality, or both - has been called a 'global epidemic'. It is now acknowledged that the majority of us are actually sleep deprived.

Sleep affects our quality of life on all levels; from productivity at work to mental health to the strength of our immune systems. A lack of sleep can even contribute to public safety, as people who are severely sleep deprived are more likely to get into car accidents, for example. All this recent research indicates that sleep is not a luxury, but an absolute necessity.

So how can we improve the quality of our sleep? Indeed, many aspects of contemporary life are stacked against us: around the clock access to communication by way smartphones, the reigning presence of television, and the lights and sounds of urban life are all obstacles on the road to quality sleep. There are, however, simple changes we can make to improve the duration and quality of our sleep, most of them falling under what is now known as sleep hygiene - proven practices that contribute to healthy sleep.

Seven easy ways to improve your sleep

Below are seven of the easiest ways to integrate sleep hygiene into your life:

Create a space for sleep. Make your bed into a place that's only for sleeping. This means watching TV, eating, and working in bed are no longer permissible activities.

Make time for sleep. Sleep is precious. Make the time around it precious too. Don't do things right before bed that can interfere with sleeping, such as working, eating or having heavy emotional conversations.

Stick to a schedule. Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning. Weekends often interfere with this, but it is very important for longer and better quality sleep that you create and maintain a good routine.

Let us help. Access your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 24/7 by phone, web or mobile app.
1.800.387.4765 or workhealthlife.com



Don't lay awake in bed. If you don't fall asleep within 10-15 minutes of shutting the lights, don't linger there watching the clock. Get out of bed, read a book or listen to some calm music in dim light until you feel tired and then try again.

Avoid naps. Naps are tempting, especially when you aren't sufficiently rested. However, to get better sleep at night, don't sleep during the day.

Cut down on caffeine and alcohol. Decreasing your daily caffeine intake will greatly improve your nightly sleep. Alcohol, though it may feel like it helps you fall asleep, actually makes your sleep less restful.

Exercise. Regular exercise is a great way to boost your sleep time and sleep quality. For best results, exercise early in the day, as doing so before bed can actually have the opposite effect.

Establishing healthy habits in relation to sleep is extremely important. Improved sleep will positively affect your work, your relationships and your health, so invest in yourself by getting better at sleeping!

Keeping homework time stress free

Parenting, without a doubt, is rife with challenges that develop, change and come at us like curveballs with a speed that seems to exceed that of the aging of your kids. One often unexpected challenge for parents is the progression of homework. As children get older and progress through grade school, homework increases. It can be difficult to get your kids to sit down and do this work, and what can additionally rattle the nerves is the feeling that you might not be up to speed on what your kids are learning. Below, find some ideas to stay positive while keeping your kids on track with their homework.

Set a routine. The absolute best way to make sure kids get on track with their homework is to insist on a daily routine. After school, allow a 30 minute break with a snack and some play-time, but avoid television or video games in this break. Depending on your child's attention span, age, and other needs, you may go straight into homework after this break or wait until after dinner. The key here is to be consistent, create a daily schedule and stick to it.

Create a space for homework. It's helpful if kids have a distraction-free, dedicated homework space. This can be a traditional desk with a good lamp, or something more unconventional like a spot on the floor with cushions and blankets - if your child focuses well there, that's what counts.

Bring in the real world. There are many teachable moments all around you, take homework off the page by bringing it into the rest of your life. If your child is learning fractions in school, cooking and baking are great ways to practice these skills. If you go on a trip or see an important monument or piece of architecture, stop, look at it and discuss its significance. Homework can come alive and become more fun by making it a part of daily life.

Let us help. Access your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 24/7 by phone, web or mobile app.
1.800.387.4765 or workhealthlife.com



Help when you can, admit when you can't. If your child needs help with math and you have a head for numbers, go ahead and offer some support. If French is where the challenge lies and you don't speak a word of it, be upfront with your child about your limitations. Where you can't help, encourage your child to get what they need from their teacher, another family member, a friend or even a tutor.

Never take over. It can be tempting and even a lot of fun to take over the bulk of the work on a child's project, but resist this temptation. There's a difference between helping and doing the work for your child - the latter won't help at all in the long run.

Talk with teachers. Being in close contact with your child's teachers will ensure that you are on track with how homework and in-school work are connected. You can be aware of your child's progress this way, and if there are any difficulties or struggles you'll know about them before they snowball into bigger problems.

Just like any type of work, homework is best not left to the last minute. Use the tips above to lay a great foundation for your child's homework habits and you can expect less stress at homework time.

Let us help. Access your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 24/7 by phone, web or mobile app.
1.800.387.4765 or workhealthlife.com

