

RESILIENCY

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Sleep Awareness Week is March 13th-19th this year, and as something many of us don't get enough of, it's important for us to understand why we need it.

Why should I care about a good sleep schedule?¹

Having a consistent sleep schedule has many health benefits, both physically and mentally. It can help protect your body against sickness, as your immune system is stronger when your body is rested. It also lowers the risk of serious illness; for example, adequate rest each night helps to regulate blood pressure. Sleeping regularly can also help your body stay at a consistent and healthy weight. Stress hormones will signal your body to hold onto weight if you are not sleeping enough to keep your body energized throughout the day. Sleep is also one of the most powerful stress relievers, as it can regulate your mood and even improve your concentration.

How much sleep should I be getting per night?

Although the answer to this question varies from person to person, the average adult should be receiving 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. For those over age 65, 7 to 8 hours of sleep is enough.²

What are some tips on how I can fall asleep more easily?¹

- Make sure your room is dark and at a slightly cooler temperature. Our bodies experience a slight dip in temperature during sleep, so lowering the temperature helps with our regulation and comfort.
- Stop looking at your phone or any other electronic device 30 minutes before bedtime. Digital devices emit blue light which restrains our bodies from producing melatonin, the hormone that makes us sleepy.
- Limit your caffeine intake 4 to 6 hours before bedtime! Caffeine stays in our systems for hours after our first sip. Instead, switch to herbal teas or decaffeinated beverages later in the day.
- Doing 30 minutes of daily exercise can benefit your ability to fall asleep. However, beware that exercising too close to bedtime can have the opposite effect!

Fact or Fiction?²

"Napping during the day makes up for lack of sleep at night." – **FICTION**. One of the main reasons for needing 7-9 hours of sleep each night is to get the benefits of multiple *consecutive* REM cycles.

"A glass of hot milk before bedtime puts you right to sleep." – **FICTION**. While this may be comforting, there is no scientific proof of this helping with sleep.

"Meditating before bedtime can help calm your mind, leading to sleep." – **FACT**. Meditation—and other quiet, calm, screen-free activities—help you relax and prepare you for sleep.