

Sleep Awareness

Why?



Poor sleep can increase the risk of having poor health, and poor health can make it harder to sleep. Sleep disturbances can be one of the first signs of distress. Common mental health problems like anxiety and depression can often underpin sleep problems.



Sleep is important because it enables the body to repair and be fit and ready for another day. Getting adequate rest may also help prevent excess weight gain, heart disease, and increased illness duration.



Sleep Can Boost Your Immune System - When your body gets the sleep it needs, your immune cells and proteins get the rest they need to fight off whatever comes their way – like colds or the flu.



Sleep Can Strengthen Your Heart - Not getting enough sleep can lead to heart health problems like high blood pressure or heart attacks. That's because lack of sleep can cause your body to release cortisol, a stress hormone that triggers your heart to work harder. Just like your immune system, your heart needs rest in order to function powerfully and properly.

Facts



One in 3 of us suffer from poor sleep, with stress, computers and taking work home often blamed.



Most of us need around 8 hours of good-quality sleep a night to function properly – but some need more and some less. What matters is that you find out how much sleep you need and then try to achieve it.



After several sleepless nights, the mental effects become more serious. Your brain will fog, making it difficult to concentrate and make decisions. You'll start to feel down, and may fall asleep during the day. Your risk of injury and accidents at home, work and on the road also increases.

Top tips



Starting on a weekend, try to add on an extra hour or 2 of sleep a night. The way to do this is to go to bed when you're tired, and allow your body to wake you in the morning (no alarm clocks allowed!).



Expect to sleep for upwards of 10 hours a night at first. After a while, the amount of time you sleep will gradually decrease to a normal level.



Don't rely on caffeine or energy drinks as a short-term pick-me-up. They may boost your energy and concentration temporarily, but can disrupt your sleep patterns even further in the long term.



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