



Sleep

Droopy eyelids and low energy are the least of your worries when you're sleep-deprived. If you aren't getting the seven to eight hours that's ideal, you could be seriously compromising your health.

Sleep is essential for your immune system because it helps regulate the body's response to infection. Sleep is also important for weight control. When we get fewer than 7 hours we produce more of the appetite-promoting hormone ghrelin and less of the satiety producing hormone leptin. Sleep is also important for your memory, reaction time and general cognition.

Why is sleep important for physical activity?

Sleep is the most important part for physical recovery. It's a time for your body system to reset and rebuild. It also allows muscles to heal from working out and ultimately helps them get stronger. Fewer aches means you'll enjoy exercise more and consequentially want to do it more often. Rest, in the form of sleep, is vital to be able to perform to your highest potential.

Tips to help you fall asleep

- ***Stick to a sleep schedule.** Go to bed and get up the same time every day.
- ***Include physical activity in your daily routine!** Regular physical activity can promote better sleep, helping you to fall asleep faster and to enjoy deeper sleep.
- ***Black out.** TVs, computers, and even hallway lights should be switched to the off position. Even the smallest amounts of light can disturb slumber.
- ***Drown out Noise.** Sleep with a fan on or invest in a sound machine to drown out other noises that may bother you.
- ***Be Cool.** Cold is sleep's partner in crime. Lower your thermostat a bit. A colder bedroom means your body will function at calmer, more restful speeds. Around 65°F is optimal for most people.
- ***Eat light before you go to bed.** Don't eat heavy food right before you go to bed. But also don't go to bed hungry. Your discomfort might keep you up.
- ***Breathe.** Practice deep and slow breaths before you go to bed. Inhale for 5 seconds, then pause for 3, and exhale to a count of 5. Do a total of 8 repetitions and work your way up to 15.

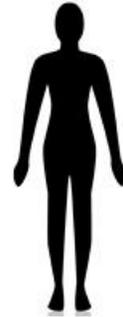
Easy Yoga Poses to Calm You

Yoga can be an effective sleep aide as part of a healthy lifestyle. Practice these poses before you go to bed to tune into the present moment and help you fall asleep faster.

Mountain Pose

This pose helps keep you in focus

1. Stand straight with your feet together and your toes spread out like a fan. Make sure your weight is distributed evenly.
2. Move your tailbone in
3. Straighten the arms, palms facing in
4. Pull your shoulder blades back and lift the chest while keeping your neck and shoulder relaxed.



Child's Pose

A brain-calming pose

1. Get on hands and knees. Knees hip distance apart. Feet together.
2. Lean back and sit on your heels.
3. Extend arms and torso forward. Rest your forehead on the floor
4. Stretch arms out in front of you. Press palms into floor and butt into heels.



Corpse pose

Deeply relaxes the entire body and soothes your sympathetic nervous system

1. Sit on the floor with your knees bent, feet on the floor. Lean back on your forearms.
2. Slowly extend both of the legs and let feet drop to the side.
3. Lie back with your head resting on the back center of the skull.
4. Release the arms to the sides. Turn the arms outward. Rest the backs of the hands on the floor
5. Let the eyes sink to the back of the head.

