

The Importance of Sleep

FOR MEMBERS



Do you sometimes have a hard time falling asleep at night or staying awake during the day? Could the quality of your nightly slumbers improve? This could be due to stress, a late bedtime, or lack of physical activity during the day.¹

We all have an internal body clock that helps regulate our sleep/wake cycles, and works closely with the hormones in our body, like cortisol.² When we are stressed, cortisol is released and makes it harder for us to fall asleep. Staying physically active can help balance our hormones.

It is commonly believed that physical activity makes you more tired. However, it can help you sleep better because:³

- ✓ It helps use up more energy during the day so that you get a better-quality sleep.
- ✓ It improves the mood, and reduces chances of experiencing anxiety.
- ✓ It reduces stress levels and allows to relax at bedtime.
- ✓ It helps break the cycle of being too tired to be active, but too alert to sleep.
- ✓ It can help build a routine of being active, getting a good night's sleep, and feeling energetic.



Here are some tips on how you can sleep better:⁴

- ✓ Take a screen break before bed.⁵ Try reading a book or having a conversation with a family member or friend instead.
- ✓ Exercise for at least 30 minutes during the day.
- ✓ Avoid working-out or doing other strenuous activity directly before going to bed.
- ✓ Switch it up and try to relax with yoga or tai chi before bed.
- ✓ Avoid spicy food or caffeine before bed.
- ✓ Start a relaxing bedtime routine that includes reading or having a warm drink (without caffeine) before bed. By establishing a routine, it will let your body and brain know that it's time to go to sleep.
- ✓ Take a walk outside before bed to clear your mind.
- ✓ Stick to a sleep schedule, even on the weekend.

Are you getting good quality sleep?



✓ Check out the factors below to find out:⁶

- Sleeping most of the time you're in bed (at least 85 percent of the total time).
- Falling asleep in 30 minutes or less.
- Waking up no more than once per night.
- Being awake for 20 minutes or less after initially falling asleep.

If you struggle with the above factors, consider starting a regular physical activity.

The Sleep Foundation recommends the following number of hours you should sleep each night:⁷



Children
(6 to 13 years)
9 to 11 hours



Teenagers
(14 to 17 years)
8 to 10 hours



Young adults
(18 to 25 years)
7 to 9 hours

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth recommend that young people between the ages of 5 and 17 get a minimum of 60 minutes of heart-pumping physical activity every day. Can't seem to fit 60 minutes a day? Even 10 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity a day can help improve your sleep.

**For more information, check out the Sleep Better page at
participACTION.com**



4-H Canada has partnered with ParticipACTION to develop this resource
participACTION.com



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