

APR

2022

Shape Up Your Sleep



In the United States, 70% of adults report that they get insufficient sleep at least one night per month, and 11% report inadequate sleep every night! It is estimated that sleep-related problems affect up to 70 million Americans of all ages and socioeconomic classes.

When it comes to overall health and well-being, the two most frequently discussed factors are diet and exercise. But sleep can be just as critical for overall body healing, restoration and weight management. Disordered sleep can negatively affect blood pressure, heart rate, mental and emotional states, hormonal and immunological function, and more.

Unfortunately, our busy lives often mean we don't get enough quality sleep. Fortunately, our understanding of sleep science, which is rooted in sleep hygiene (i.e., practices designed to optimize our sleep length and quality) is more advanced than ever before.

Sleep science tells us most adults should aim for a minimum of seven hours per night of quality sleep. Here are some sleep hygiene practices you can begin to incorporate this week:

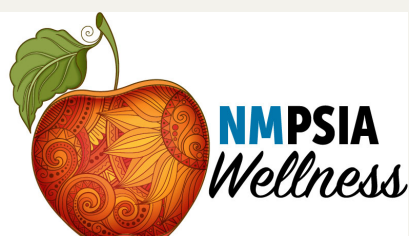
Daily Habits and Routines

- Monitor caffeine – try to curb your intake after the lunch hour.
- Turn off all electronics an hour before going to bed – if that's not possible, consider wearing blue-light blocking glasses or using a blue light filter on your device. Blue light can disrupt your body's production of melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep cycles.
- Don't dine late – and steer clear of spicy or heavy meals.
- Alcohol can cause disruptions later in your sleep cycle, even if drinking initially makes you sleepy.
- Set boundaries – discuss prioritizing sleep needs with household members.

Good Today = Better Tomorrow

- Morning sunlight exposure can help reset your sleep-wake cycle. Try to step outside or at least sit by a sunny window as soon as the sun comes up (or as soon as you're awake).
- Make physical activity a part of your daily life. People who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate movement during the day may enjoy better sleep quality that same night.
- Before bed, set aside 10 minutes to reflect on the best parts of your day. A simple meditation or gratitude-based practice can be a powerful way to relax the mind and help you wind down for sleep.

Sources: www.sleephealth.org, www.sleepfoundation.org, www.healthline.org



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