



How To Get Good Sleep

April 23 2021 4:12 PM

WEST FRANKFORT – Sleep is a vital part of every person’s daily routine as it provides a necessary recharge to your body and mind. Good sleep refreshes you, makes you feel more alert and gives you the energy you need throughout the day. Getting too little sleep will cause you to be less focused and more forgetful.

“Sleep is a necessary mood booster,” says Julie Bailey, Clinical Manager for Centerstone. “You actually process your emotions when you sleep, so getting too little sleep can make you more irritable and stressed.” Good sleep also boosts creativity, which improves self-esteem and productivity and lowers stress.

How long should I sleep?

We all know the golden standard of 8 hours, but is this a healthy expectation? Short answer: mostly yes, for adults. Experts say that 7-9 hours is a healthy daily amount of sleep for adults to get. These numbers increase, however, for younger groups. Teens should get 8-10 hours of sleep, school age kids 9-12 hours, pre-school age kids 10-13 hours and so on.

“These standards for sleep may vary from person to person, as some adults may truly need only 7 hours to function normally, and others need 9 or more,” says Julie Bailey. “But 7 hours of sleep should be the minimum goal for most adults.”

As previously stated, not getting enough sleep dampens your energy and mindfulness. On the other hand, getting too much sleep can do the same. Sleeping too much, say 10 hours a day, can actually make you more depressed. Depression also makes you more tired, making you want to sleep more, thus causing a vicious cycle.

While the length of time you spend asleep is important, so is the quality of your sleep. The sleep cycle works in several stages, and sleep is best when you go through each stage. Therefore, what you do before bed matters, as staying asleep helps ensure you go through each stage.

Optimizing sleep

Fortunately, there are several methods experts recommend for getting good sleep. Below are several recommendations to help you optimize your sleep.

Keep it consistent. It is much easier to achieve regular sleep when you set a good rhythm for yourself. Establish a sleep routine, going to bed and waking up at the same time every day. The longer you do this, the easier it will be, and the better you will feel!

Turn off your screens. The light from your phone, computer and TV screens negatively impacts your brain's melatonin levels, disrupting your sleep. This, and the stimulation from watching your favorite shows, make falling asleep harder. If you do need help falling asleep, instead try listening to relaxing music, an audiobook or sleep stories to help soothe you to sleep.

Manage your nighttime routine. What you do before bed matters. In the hours before bed, you should avoid caffeine, nicotine, sugar and alcohol, as they all either make it harder to fall asleep or disrupt your sleep once it has already started. Avoid exercising too soon before bed, as it will take time for your body to cool down. Control light, decreasing it throughout the evening to more naturally get tired.

Don't psych yourself out. If you are worried that you will have trouble falling asleep, then you likely will. This concern becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of difficulty sleeping. To take the pressure off yourself, approach sleep from a mindset of relaxing and unwinding rather than just trying to fall asleep.

Manage your stress. If you don't manage your stress during the day, it will follow you into the night, making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. If you choose to tackle your problems instead of ignoring them, you will both fall asleep and wake up the next morning more peacefully.

If you are in need of any mental health help, Centerstone is here to help. Call us at 1-877-HOPE123 (877-467-3123) or visit centerstoneconnect.org to connect to care.