

Sleeping tips



Having trouble sleeping?

Getting a good night's sleep is paramount if you want to look, feel and perform at your best. How much sleep we need varies from person to person but on average adults need between 7-9 hours a night to feel refreshed and to function well mentally and physically.

How poor sleep can affect your wellbeing

You may have the occasional restless night but if you are having problems on a regular basis it could be a sign of insomnia. Typical signs are:

- Taking a long time to get to sleep
- Lying awake at night
- Waking up several times throughout the night
- Waking up early and not being able to get back to sleep

There are lots of reasons, including medical ones, why this may be happening. Some medicines can cause it or it could be simply down to your age as insomnia is more common in older people. If you have insomnia it can lead to an increased risk of some health conditions too so it might be wise to consult your GP.

How can I improve my sleep?

- Temperature – the ideal bedroom temperature is 16-18C/60-65F though you might need to make the room a bit warmer for a child or older person
- Darkness – the darker your bedroom, the easier it is to fall asleep as darkness helps your body produce melatonin. If your room is too light, try wearing a sleep mask or invest in thick curtains or black out blinds. Keep all digital technology and devices out too as the light they emit can suppress your body's melatonin production and make you sleep less soundly
- Noise – few people find it easy to get to sleep or stay asleep in a noisy environment. Try using earplugs. On the other hand, some people find certain soft and steady sounds can actually help them sleep. If this is you, consider investing in sound therapy machine that plays sounds such as rain, ocean sounds and white noise to help you sleep more soundly



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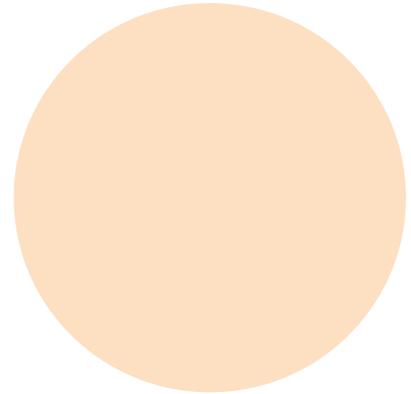
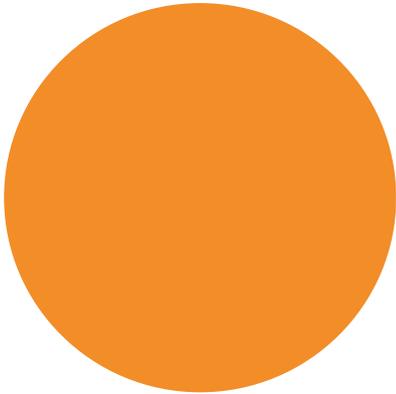


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- Comfort – How comfy is your bed? Make sure your mattress and pillows give you the right support and comfort and that your bedding is fresh and well aired. It is recommended that you change your mattress every 7 years
- Colours – Try to keep the colour of your bedroom to calm soft colours which are relaxing rather than vibrant reds and purples which can be stimulating



Are there any sleep-friendly habits I can try?

- Try and go to bed and wake up at the same time each day even at the weekends. If you are relying on an alarm to wake you up, it could mean you aren't getting enough sleep so try going to bed a little earlier
- Have a regular bedtime routine and make sure you wind down beforehand – do something that makes you feel relaxed such as a warm bath, reading, meditating or some gentle stretches but try to avoid watching TV or using your laptop or mobile phone
- Try to avoid drinks containing caffeine (tea, coffee, caffeinated soft drinks and even hot chocolate) at least 6 hours before bedtime
- Try not to have a big meal too late in the evening as this can disturb your sleep because an overactive digestive system increases your metabolism and body temperature. Eat dinner at least 2-3 hours before bedtime but don't go to bed hungry. Have a light snack - a banana, small pot of yoghurt, small bowl of cereal with milk or half a teaspoon of peanut butter
- Drink less liquid during the evening so you don't wake up needing to go to the loo
- Tackle stress as it, together with anxiety are among the top things that prevent people from sleeping well. Try using mindfulness techniques to help lower your heart rate which in turn helps your brain to become less alert and active and so induce sleep



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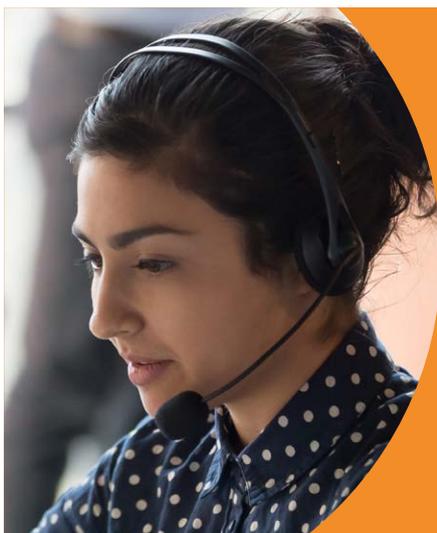
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Have I got a sleep problem?

- Snoring is the second most common cause of disturbed sleep. Solutions include changing your sleeping position so you are on your side rather than your back, losing weight, avoiding alcohol, giving up smoking, trying nasal strips or a mouth guard
- Sleep Apnoea – if you are gasping or making choking noises in your sleep, your upper airways may be collapsing during sleep, making your breathing irregular and cause daytime sleepiness. See your GP
- Teeth Grinding (Bruxism) can also have a major impact on you and your partners sleep. It's a common problem and affect up to 10% of the UK population. Consult your dentist for the best advice

How much sleep should my child be getting?

The amount of sleep your child needs largely depend on their age. At the age of 3 month they should be getting 4-5 hours sleep during the day and 11 hours at night. Daytime sleeping will reduce over the next few years and by the time they are 4 shouldn't be happening and they should just be getting about 11.5 hours a night. This will then reduce as they get older and by the time they are 14, they should be having about 9 hours a night until they are 16.



The Licensed Trade Charity are available 24/7, if you'd like to talk about your situation, we can help you. Contact us for confidential, free of charge support. If you are experiencing any of the issues covered in this fact sheet, in the first instance call our helpline on:

0808 801 0550

Our Helpline Team will listen without judging and will work with you as best they can to achieve a positive outcome. If you prefer, you can email: enquiries@ltcharity.org.uk or visit our website at www.licensedtradecharity.org.uk, it's full of useful information about the kind of issues we know people who work in the licensed trade face.

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Note: This guide is not exhaustive. It has been produced by the Licensed Trade Charity to provide you with an overview of the issue in question. We are grateful to all specialist organisations who support our charity and are available to you should you be experiencing this particular issue.
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