



Sleep and Fatigue

Are you tired all the time? Struggling to fall or stay asleep? How well-rested do you feel?

Sleep is as important to our bodies as food, water and oxygen. A good night's sleep helps our bodies and minds recover from the work we did and prepare for the day to come. A lack of good quality sleep not only causes tiredness and fatigue, but can also cause mood disturbances, slowed reaction time, impaired judgement, poor concentration and reduced memory abilities – all of which impacts our performance at work.

What does 'well-rested' look like?

Feeling-well rested can help us to cope better with challenges and improve our mental and physical wellbeing. If you are getting enough sleep, you are likely to:

- Feel refreshed when waking in the morning
- Experience good concentration and efficiency during the day
- Have enough energy to do the things you enjoy

If you are able to fall asleep within 10-15 minutes of getting into bed, you are probably well-rested. If you fall asleep in less than 5 minutes, you may be sleep deprived.

Everyone needs different amounts of sleep to function normally. The average adult needs around eight hours of sleep each day, but the amount an individual needs may vary from seven to nine hours per day.

Symptoms of sleep deprivation

When we are not getting enough sleep, it can take a toll on our bodies and minds. Some signs that you are sleep deprived are:

- Constant yawning or tiredness during the day
- Feeling irritable
- Dozing off while watching television or in the quiet moments of your day
- Feeling groggy when waking in the morning.

Insufficient sleep can also affect your alertness, memory, creativity, and concentration – this can have a massive impact on other areas of your life such as driving and work.

- Staying awake for 24 hours leads to a reduction in hand/eye coordination similar to having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.1, which is twice the legal driving limit.
- The Transport Accident Commission estimates that fatigue is involved in one in five fatal car accidents.
- Fatigue can also be a safety issue in the workplace. There may be a risk to yourself and/or others if your concentration and reaction times are affected.

In addition to these symptoms, your relationships with friends and family may be affected if you are frequently tired and in a bad mood. It's worth getting those extra hours of sleep!

Good sleep habits

There are many habits which make it easier for us to get a better night's sleep. Making a few small changes to your sleep habits can help to significantly improve your sleep quality.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY CLOCK

We all have an internal 'clock' that helps to control our sleep-wake cycle. Getting up at the same time every day (even if you don't have work), getting plenty of sunlight in the mornings, and going to bed when we feel tired are all ways that we can work with our clock rather than against it.

SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT

Your sleeping environment is vital to making sure you get and stay asleep.

- **Tranquil:** Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet. Use earplugs if you need to block out noise. The blanket, mattress, and pillow should be comfortable.
- **Temperature:** Make sure the room is your preferred temperature and avoid being too hot or cold.
- **Technology:** Remove distractions such as televisions, computers and mobile phones.

WATCH WHAT YOU PUT IN YOUR BODY

Cigarettes, caffeine and alcohol can all disrupt the quality of your sleep. Eating heavy meals too close to bedtime or going to bed hungry can make it difficult to sleep. All of these should be avoided in the late evening as they can keep you awake or disrupt your sleep cycle.

ROUTINE

Develop a daily routine so your body knows when it is time to sleep and wake up. Go to bed at the same time every night. Exercise everyday if you can, but not too close to bedtime. Your body needs time to wind down before trying to sleep.

More Information

If you have concerns about your sleep habits, please talk to your GP. Alternatively, the following websites offer some information about sleep, and how to improve your sleep habits.

Sleep Health Foundation

<https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/fact-sheets.html>

Better Health Channel

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/sleep>



Need Help?

If any of the topics covered raise concerns for you, please reach out. No-one needs to face problems alone. The OzHelp wellbeing and support team are available during business hours. Lifeline 13 11 14 is available 24/7 for crisis support.

T 1300 694 357 | E info@ozhelp.org.au | W ozhelp.org.au

Please note: The information in this booklet is not intended to be a substitute for specific independent health advice, nor is it intended as a self-treatment program. Such decisions should be made in consultation with a health professional.