



How to Sleep Better?



Healthy sleep habits can make a significant difference in our quality of life. When it comes to sleep, it's not just quantity that matters - it's quality. How we feel during our waking hours hinges greatly on how well we sleep. Our sleep schedule, bedtime habits, and day-to-day lifestyle choices can make a substantial difference to the quality of our nightly rest. The following tips will help us optimize our sleep so we can be productive, mentally sharp, emotionally balanced, and full of energy all day long.

Make sleep a priority

Simply deciding that getting at least 8 hours of sleep a night can go a long way. Resist putting work or household chores, checking of emails or Facebook, watching your favourite late night show or even reading a good book - ahead of sleep.

Develop a sleep routine

Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on the weekends. Studies suggest that going to sleep at 10 pm and waking up at 6 am works the best with our body's natural rhythms. Developing a ritual that we follow each night before going to sleep (e.g. journaling, reading, paced breathing, or drinking chamomile tea. etc) can also help prepare our body for rest.

Make the bed a "sleep only" space

Sometimes it is easy to convert our bed into an all-purpose area. Eating in bed, watching TV in bed, or even working in bed can make it more difficult for us to sleep at night.

Avoid eating and exercise within three hours of going to sleep

This can be hard for night owls, but it is important to remember that eating and exercise both get our body energized, not ready for a good night's sleep. Although regular exercise can make it easier for us to sleep eventually, we should make sure to leave our body plenty of time to wind down afterwards.

Turn off the lights (and devices)

Make sure that the area where we sleep is dark and quiet. The hormone melatonin is produced in total darkness, and the longer we stay in the dark, the more melatonin the pineal gland produces. Melatonin regulates our sleep and wake cycles, destroys free radicals, suppresses the development of breast cancer, increases the immune system's killer lymphocytes and more. Some people use black-out shades or eye masks to block out light when they sleep and/or turn off or move anything out of the room that emits even dim light in their bedroom (e.g. LED lights in TVs, clocks or night lights). If you need a night light, a dim red light is the best choice.

Listen to our body – and get rid of the alarm clock!

After starting to get into a sleep routine, see if our body can awake on time naturally, without the help of an alarm clock. (Maybe try this out on the weekend first, though!) Listening to our body is the best measure of whether we're getting sufficient rest.

If you are interested in receiving more information on Sleep or other relevant and useful information, remember that My EAP is here to help. Contact us at eap@familiesinaction.net