

SleepWell

Sleep Better, Study Better, Perform Better



Resource Page

Sleep for Success

Why is sleep so important?

- Sleep restores energy to muscles.
- Memory and new learning is consolidated during sleep.
- Your immune system recharges during sleep.
- Inconsistent sleep patterns or lack of sufficient sleep can lead to:

Decreased:

- ↓ Grades
- ↓ Attention
- ↓ Memory

Increased:

- ↑ Mood Swings
- ↑ Anger
- ↑ Depression

Healthy Sleep Habits:

- Relax before bedtime (stretching, visualization, meditation, etc.).
- Go to bed and wake up at approximately the same time each day. (Yes, even on weekends!)
- Avoid naps entirely or limit naps to 45 minutes in the early afternoon (or no later than 4 pm).
- Exercise on a regular basis but avoid strenuous activity within 4 hours of bedtime.
- Avoid substances with caffeine within 4 hours of bedtime; avoid alcohol within 2 hours of bedtime.
- A light carbohydrate snack and dairy before bedtime may help you sleep: yogurt, plain cookies such as vanilla wafers or graham crackers with milk, small lean meat sandwich. Avoid high fat foods or large amounts of protein that your body has to stay “awake” to digest (pizza, wings, etc.).
- Exposure to natural light, such as a walk outside in the morning, will help you to wake up and feel alert.

Do TV or Video Games Impact Sleep?

Yes. Exciting television programs, movies, and video games can over-stimulate you and make it harder to fall asleep. The “glow” from electronic devices can inhibit our natural sleep cycle. If you have trouble falling asleep, avoid using your computer or other devices for at least an hour before you try to fall asleep.

What should I do if I think too much and can't sleep?

- Keep blank paper next to your bed and write out all the things you are thinking about.
- Elicit the relaxation response through breathing exercises or meditation.

What should I do if my roommate or residence hall is too noisy?

- You can use soft, disposable earplugs which will reduce the noise. You can also use a sleep mask to cover your eyes if your roommate leaves the light on.
- Talk to your roommate to make a plan that better meets both of your needs. Talk to your RA if the entire hall tends to be noisy, or, if you live off campus talk to your housemates and/or landlord.

What if I like to stay up late on the weekend?

If you don't feel well rested, then getting consistent sleep, even on weekends could help a lot. But, if you just can't shake the party bug:

- If possible, take classes that start later.
- If you select Friday as your only late night out, that will give you more time to resume your sleep schedule for Monday.
- Get outside and exercise in the morning; sunshine and exercise can reset the biological sleep clock.

A Bed is a Bed, not a Desk - Stimulus Control Instructions

Part of learning to sleep better is helping your brain associate your bed with sleep, and only with sleep. If you do your homework in bed, or do exciting things like watch movies in bed or spend a lot of time online with your laptop in bed, you may find it difficult to then relax and sleep in bed. Take advantage of other locations to study and socialize (lounges, library, common areas, cafes and coffee shops, etc.).

To turn your bed into a cue for sleep:

1. Use your bed only for sleep and intimacy.
2. Establish a set of regular pre-sleep routines that signal to your brain that it is time for sleep. Each night do the same wind-down routine. Examples: prepare materials for the next day, tidy up room, clear off bed, take a warm shower, say good-night to friends and loved ones, meditate or pray, etc. If you have trouble quieting your mind, try breathing exercises to elicit your body's relaxation response.
3. *At bedtime:* Lie down intending to sleep only when sleepy. If unable to fall asleep after about 15 minutes, get up and go into another room. If in a residence hall, get out of bed and do something relaxing, *not homework* (homework will just wake up your brain again). Try to avoid bright lights from a television or computer during this time. Return to bed only after you feel sleepy. If, once in bed, or if you re-awake at a later time and cannot fall asleep within 15 minutes, get out of bed once more and repeat the process.

Products that May Negatively Impact Sleep

Beverages and Candy that Contain Caffeine

Regular Coffee (8 oz)	60 – 350 mg
Decaffeinated Coffee	2 – 4 mg
Black Tea (8 oz)	30 – 120 mg
Green Tea	30 – 50 mg
Colas (Coke, Pepsi, Root Beer, etc)	20 – 60 mg
Energy Drinks (Red Bull, Vault, Full Throttle, Monster)	50-150 mg
Chocolate (per oz)	8 - 20 mg

Caffeine content information retrieved 12/6/07 from <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/caffeine/AN01211>

Medications

Some over-the-counter medicines contain stimulants such as caffeine or pseudoephedrine. Some prescription medications could interfere with sleep or make you too sleepy; be sure to talk with your health care provider and/or pharmacist about possible side effects of any medications you may be taking.

Alcohol

Do not drink alcoholic beverages within 2 hours of bedtime. Alcohol, since it is a sedative, may make you feel tired, but as your body metabolizes the alcohol it disrupts the sleep process and you may not awaken feeling rested.

Resources

Emory University Student Health and Counseling Services

- Student Health Services Appointments – 404-727-7551 or schedule online via the *Patient Portal* at <http://studenthealth.emory.edu>
 - Visits with health care providers at Student Health and Counseling Services are FREE and confidential. Charges may be incurred for lab tests or medications and supplies.
- Office of Health Promotion Appointments –
 - To schedule an appointment to discuss sleep strategies with a health educator, call Heather Zesiger directly at 404-727-1736 or send her a secure message via the *Patient Portal*.
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Appointments – 404-727-7450