

HOW DO I FALL ASLEEP?

Mastering Sleep Hygiene



1

GO TO BED AND WAKE UP AROUND THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY

Your body has a hard time adjusting to changes in your sleep habits. If you want to be consistently able to fall asleep, this is the best way to do it. (Additionally, research shows that sleeping in on the weekends doesn't help you recover from a sleepless week.)



2

WARMER LIGHTING LATE IN THE DAY

Cool, bright lights trick your brain into thinking it's still daytime. This means your brain delays the release of melatonin, a chemical that helps make you sleepy late in the day. Try lighting your home with dim, yellow or orange-toned lights at night. To be more awake during the day, light your surroundings with cool, white light.



3

EXERCISE, BUT NOT WITHIN 3 HOURS OF BEDTIME

Exercise can definitely help you fall asleep, but exercising also raises your core body temperature. The body drops in core temperature before bed to get ready for sleep. If you've exercised too close to bedtime, the increase in body temperature will make it hard for your body to cool down enough for you to comfortably fall asleep.



4

SLEEP IN A COOL, DARK ROOM

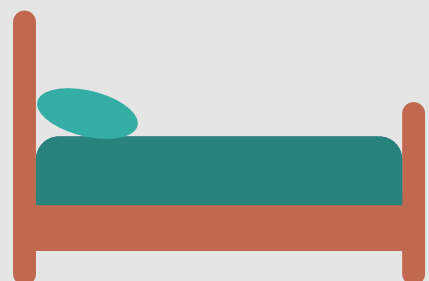
By sleeping in a room that's about 65F, you're helping your body maintain the conditions that help you fall asleep. Any light will tell your brain its time to be awake, so keep your bedroom as dark as possible.



5

TAKE A HOT BATH BEFORE BED

Although it may seem counter intuitive, a hot bath can help you cool down before bed. Hot water causes your blood to flow closer to the surface of your skin, mimicking what your body does when it's getting sleepy. After taking a bath you'll cool down rapidly, making it easier to fall asleep.



6

DON'T LIE IN BED AWAKE FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES

Being anxious about sleeping makes it even harder to sleep. If you've laid in bed watching the clock for half an hour, get up and do something else (quietly and in dim light). Making a list of things you have to do the next day may help quiet your mind.

ADAPTED BY REBECCA THOMPSON FROM

"WALKER, MATTHEW P. WHY WE SLEEP: THE NEW SCIENCE OF SLEEP AND DREAM. MIEJSCE NIEZNANE: PENGUIN BOOKS, 2018."

TO STUDY... OR SLEEP?

How Sleep Impacts Learning (and Academic Performance)

BEFORE CLASS



WITHOUT SLEEP, YOUR SHORT TERM MEMORY WILL STAY "FULL"

Short term memories are stored in your hippocampus. This storage capacity is limited, and needs to be cleared out to make way for new memories. This process occurs when you get quality sleep! Short term memories are consolidated into long term storage.

DURING CLASS



WITHOUT SLEEP, YOU'LL LOSE CONCENTRATION WITHOUT REALIZING IT

When you're sleep deprived, your brain will fall into a microsleep. A microsleep is where you lose all responsiveness to the outside world, often only for a few seconds. You could be in class and repeatedly losing 10-15 seconds worth of material multiple times an hour, without realizing it's happening.

AFTER CLASS



WITHOUT SLEEP, YOU'LL RETAIN LESS INFORMATION FROM CLASSES AND READINGS

During sleep, your brain moves your short term memories into your neocortex, where long term memories are stored. Your brain can recover "forgotten" memories, salvaging things that may have slipped away during waking hours. In fact, sleep offers a memory retention benefit of 20-40% over waking time (Walker 2018).

"BUT I FEEL FINE, AND I DON'T GET 7-9 HOURS OF SLEEP."

One of the more concerning aspects of sleep deprivation is that people often don't realize how cognitively impaired they become after sleeping less than 7 hours. Even if you don't feel tired, research has shown that you're still more likely to make mistakes (Walker 2018).



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