

Everyone needs a Good Night's Sleep

Everyone can benefit from a good night's sleep! A restful night will help increase your productivity and decrease your stress level. To ensure that you get a good night's sleep it is important to develop good sleep hygiene.



What is sleep hygiene? According to the National Sleep Foundation, "Sleep hygiene is a variety of different practices and habits that are necessary to have good nighttime sleep quality and full daytime alertness." Here are my Top Five Sleep Hygiene habits that will ensure a good night's sleep.

1. Avoid caffeine, nicotine and other stimulant drugs at least three hours before you go to bed. Also, be sure to limit alcohol. Although alcohol is known to help you go to sleep faster, it can interrupt the sleep cycle particularly during the second half of it. Be sure to avoid foods that cause indigestion before bed. These foods may include; spicy, high fat, or fried foods. These "heavy foods" tend to cause heartburn and bloating which can prevent you from falling asleep.



2. Cardio-Vascular exercise can help you to fall asleep sooner and stay asleep all night. During exercise your heart rate increases making you feel very alert. However, about an hour after your body cools down your resting heart rate will be lower than what it was originally. This lower resting heart rate will help you to sleep.



3. Develop a regular bedtime routine. Developing a bedtime routine your body winds down and gets ready for sleep. This both consciously and subconsciously prepares the body for sleep. So a relaxing book or music can set the tone for a good night's sleep.

4. Make sure your sleep environment is simple and clean. Avoid cluttering your room with too much stuff that will detract from a good night's sleep such as cell phones, bright clocks, or loud heaters or humidifiers. Make sure that your mattress is comfortable for you and be sure to flip or rotate your mattress on a monthly basis to prevent it from sagging. Finally keep your sheets and pillow cases clean. I recommend washing them at least once every two weeks. If you really enjoy the smell and feel of clean sheets, then wash them even more.



A good night's sleep is not only needed but a well-deserved break for busy students. Taking the time to follow these simple sleep hygiene rules will help you sleep better and make your waking hours more productive.