



How Much Rest Do You Really Need?

Getting sufficient amounts of restful sleep is essential for good health. According to the Sleep Foundation¹, most adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep each day, though this can vary greatly from person to person depending on factors like physical activity, muscle mass, and chronic health conditions.

It has been estimated that as many as one-third of Americans² and Canadians³ get less than 7 hours of sleep each night, a level that has been linked to an increased risk for diabetes, cancer, and accidents. Similarly, the Institute of Medicine estimates⁴ that 50 to 70 million Americans are plagued with chronic sleep disorders, which can alter immune function and metabolism.

Being able to recognize the early warning signs of sleep deprivation can help you make the necessary lifestyle changes to get better rest.

Here are some signs that you may not be getting enough sleep:

You cannot think clearly. Problem solving and critical thinking activities are significantly muted when you are sleep deprived.

You doze off or feel tired throughout the day. Excessive sleepiness during waking hours is another indicator that you could be sleep deficient.

You are irritable. Irritability and increased vulnerability to stress could also indicate that you need more rest.

You have gained weight. While there are many factors that contribute to weight gain, a significant amount of research points to sleep insufficiency as being a big one. Hormone levels that regulate hunger and fullness shift during states of sleeplessness, and that can hinder your ability to regulate your appetite and your weight.

If you are not getting enough sleep, consider starting a sleep journal to see if you can identify any patterns that might be contributing to your sleeplessness. Then, if you still struggle to get enough rest, talk with your doctor to see what other treatment options are available.



1. <https://doi.org/10.5665/sleep.1846>
2. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works>

3. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28930365/>
4. <https://doi.org/10.5665/sleep.1846>



Evening Self-Care Rituals to Help You Unwind

Unwinding after a full day is a challenge for many, but because experts recommend getting at least 7 hours of restful sleep each night, it is something that needs to be prioritized.

Here are some evening self-care rituals to help you unwind:

Use essential oils. Aromatherapy has been shown to have a positive impact on mood. Certain essential oils⁵, like lavender, jasmine, chamomile, and valerian have been shown to have a sedative effect.

Adjust lighting. Lighting is heavily involved with your circadian rhythm and can have a direct impact on your sleep. For this reason, dimming the lights in the evening may help you relax and unwind.

Avoid caffeine. If you struggle with falling asleep, try reducing your caffeine consumption during the day. Limit your intake to the morning hours and see how it affects your sleep patterns.

Set a bedtime alarm. Use your alarm as a reminder to begin easing into a more restful state. You can set your alarm for tasks such as turning off the TV, tucking in your digital devices for the evening, or reading a book.

Upgrade your bedding. Assess the condition of your mattress and pillow. If neither have been replaced for an extended period of time, you may want to consider upgrading them.



Adjust the temperature. It has been suggested that the ideal temperature for sleep is 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Of course, this is highly variable from person to person, and it may require some experimenting to find the temperature that is right for you.⁶

Seek expert guidance. If you have tried a number of different self-care strategies and you still struggle to get good sleep, seek guidance from your healthcare team to explore other treatment options.

*Creating evening self-care rituals
can help you stay aligned with your
natural circadian rhythms, so you
can get better sleep.*

5. <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2013.0311>

6. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/bedroom-environment/best-temperature-for-sleep>



Sleep Apnea: Risks & Signs

A 2019 study⁷ estimated that at least 730 million people suffer with sleep apnea globally. According to the Cleveland Clinic, sleep apnea is diagnosed “when you stop breathing for 10 seconds or longer — at least five times an hour — during sleep.”

Sleep apnea is a treatable condition. However, if left untreated it can pose significant health risks, including sudden cardiac death. For that reason, it is important to take risk factors seriously.

Risk Factors for Sleep Apnea

Weight. While not perfect, the body mass index (BMI) is a quick way to assess your weight. Being overweight, defined as a BMI between 25-29.9, is linked to an increased risk for sleep apnea.

Smoking. Smoking is associated with increased pulmonary inflammation, which also increases the risk of developing sleep apnea.

Neck Circumference. A wide neck circumference, often accompanied by excess body weight, has been linked to a higher incidence of sleep apnea.

Comorbidities. Sleep apnea is common in the presence of other health conditions, such as congestive heart failure, hypertension, diabetes, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), and asthma.

Male. Men have a higher incidence of sleep apnea than women, and there have also been an increased number of cases reported in individuals undergoing female-to-male gender reassignment⁸.



Signs of Sleep Apnea

Snoring loudly. Loud snoring is one of the most common signs of sleep apnea, and sleepless partners are often the first to detect it.

Gasping or choking during sleep. While gasping during sleep is also tied to other medical conditions, such as acid reflux and post-nasal drip, it is also a common sign of sleep apnea.

Morning headaches. Prolonged bouts of oxygen deprivation can cause headaches, especially in the morning.

If you are concerned that you might have some risk factors or signs of sleep apnea, schedule an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible. A referral to a sleep specialist may be necessary.

7. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(19\)30198-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(19)30198-5)

8. <https://aasm.org/rising-prevalence-of-sleep-apnea-in-u-s-threatens-public-health/>

9. <https://doi.org/10.5664/jcsm.8010>

Chamomile Tea Sleepy Bites

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup dates, pitted
- 1/2 cup dried tart cherries
- 1/2 cup walnut halves
- 1/2 cup instant rolled oats
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon chamomile tea leaves
- 1/3 cup almond butter

Instructions

1. Add dates, cherries, walnuts, chamomile tea and oats to a food processor.
2. Process ingredients for 3-5 minutes until the mixture is completely blended into a medium-sized crumb.
3. Transfer to a mixing bowl and add honey and almond butter. Mix until almond butter and honey are evenly distributed.
4. Form into 12-15 bites, slightly smaller than a golf ball.
5. Enjoy now or place in the fridge. Energy bites will last up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

Prep Time	Total Time	Servings
15 minutes	15 minutes	24



Nutrition Facts

Calories	97
Fat	3.5g
Sodium	6mg
Carbohydrates	16.8g
Protein	1.6g



Keep a Sleep Journal

Use an app, digital tracker, spreadsheet, or a journal to keep a sleep log. Record how many hours of sleep you get each night for at least a week, as well as any notes about how you feel during the day.

Employer Completion Form

I completed Sleep Journal Wellbeing Activity by:

☐

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Prioritize Sleep

Evening self-care to help you unwind:

ESSENTIAL OILS

Aromatherapy has been shown to have a sedative effect.

BEDDING

Assess the condition of your mattress and pillow and consider upgrading them.

CAFFEINE

Limit your intake to the morning hours only and see how it affects your sleep patterns.

TEMPERATURE

The suggested ideal temperature for sleep is 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

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Your Wellbeing Activity

Keep a sleep journal

Use an app, digital tracker, spreadsheet, or a journal to keep a sleep log. Record how many hours of sleep you get each night for at least a week, as well as any notes about how you feel during the day.