



EMPLOYEE SERIES

Tips for improving your sleep

Everyone has trouble sleeping at some time. Sometimes there seems no obvious cause. The following tips may help you improve the quality and amount of sleep you have.

-  Get up at the same time each morning and avoid naps through the day, to re-establish a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
-  Be active during the day, but not close to bed time. Some physical activity outdoors in the daylight is ideal, remembering to be sun smart.
-  Keep to a relaxing routine before bed and keep lights low – this signals your body and mind to prepare for sleep.
-  If you find you have not fallen asleep within around 20 minutes of going to bed, it is best to get up again and do something else that is calming and relaxing and return to bed when you feel sleepy.
-  Minimise caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, chocolate and other stimulants late at night and avoid heavy meals in the evening.
-  If you are feeling stressed or upset and there are issues on your mind, work through these during the day by seeking help or taking action to improve things. It may be best to defer making big decisions or acting on your feelings as lack of sleep can affect your mood and judgement.
-  If your poor sleep persists, consult your GP. In some cases, medication or sleep equipment may assist with persistent sleep problems to help re-establish normal sleep patterns.
-  You might find it helpful to write your thoughts in a diary or talk them over with someone. Set some time aside each day where you allow yourself to think about the day's events and note down what you need to do tomorrow.
-  If you wake through the night and feel unsettled after a bad dream, doing something a little different can help you switch back into a more relaxed mode. E.g, turning your pillow over to the cool side can be refreshing or get up for a short time.
-  Make sure your bedroom is an uncluttered, relaxing and soothing place that is free of work, study or arguments. Check the noise level and temperature. Fresh air can be helpful.
-  Many people find relaxation or meditation helpful. A simple relaxation technique is to lie or sit somewhere comfortable and quiet and focus on your breathing. Slow your breathing down as you think about it. You can also focus on a relaxing word such as "calm" or "peace" or think about your favourite place.