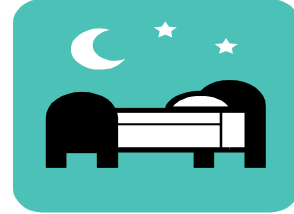




BACK FACTS: Good Night's Sleep

Lack of sleep is no joke and getting a good night's rest eludes quite a few people. We spend about one-third of our lives sleeping, so getting the most out of it is important.

While there might not be a lot you can do to prevent work-related stress or worries that keep you up in the night, a few simple lifestyle and nutritional changes, can work wonders when it comes to waking-up feeling refreshed.



For a good night's rest

1. When choosing a mattress, look for one that is comfortably supportive. A mattress should be flexible enough to adapt to your body's shape, while providing firm support for your spine. If you share a bed, choose a mattress that provides independent support for each sleeper. Generally, your mattress should be replaced every 8 to 12 years to ensure the proper support and comfort.
2. Be selective when choosing a pillow. When lying on your side, your head, neck and shoulders should remain level with your mid and lower spine. When lying on your back, your head and neck should remain level with your upper back and spine. Avoid pillows that are so thick or thin that they angle your head and neck away from your body.
3. Your sleeping position is also an important factor in how you will feel when you wake-up. It's best to sleep on your back or side, not on your stomach. Lying on your back or side allows your head, neck and spine to relax into their natural alignment. This will help you avoid feeling stiff and wake-up feeling rejuvenated in the morning.
4. If you have low back pain and are sleeping on your back, place a pillow under your knees to take some of the pressure off your back. If you sleep on your side, place a pillow between your knees for added support.

Things to keep in mind

1. Limit your intake of caffeinated beverages such as coffee, colas and tea in the evening. Caffeine is a stimulant and can make it difficult for you to fall asleep. Similarly alcoholic beverages close to bedtime may make you feel sleepy, but can disrupt your sleep pattern and cause a restless night.

2. Don't eat a large, heavy meal just before bed. A late dinner may interfere with sleep as your body works to digest the food you've eaten. Try to eat dinner at least two hours before bedtime.
3. A regular exercise program can also help you sleep more soundly at night. Exercising in the mornings is best, but if you must exercise in the evenings, do so at least two hours before bedtime. Any later, and your increased heart rate can interfere with your sleep.
4. Try to go to bed at the same time everyday. This includes weekends! This will help to keep your sleep cycle in a regular rhythm. Similarly, avoid naps during the day. If you are especially tired, and feel as if you absolutely must nap, try to sleep for less than 30 minutes and before 3:00 pm in the day.
5. Expose yourself to bright light/sunlight soon after you wake up. This will help to regulate your body's natural biological clock.
6. Try incorporating bedtime rituals such as listening to soft music or sipping a cup of herbal tea. These cues will help let your body know when it's time to prepare for sleep.
7. Avoid looking at the clock if you happen to wake in the middle of the night. This can cause added anxiety and keep you awake even longer.
8. If you can't fall asleep after 30 minutes of trying, get out of bed and do something boring in dim light until you become sleepy.

Canada's chiropractors – here to help

Chiropractors can help you prevent aches and pains by providing advice on the right mattress and pillow for you. Should you suffer discomfort from your sleep habits, a chiropractor can also provide treatment for your pain.

Fact: 80 per cent of Canadians will suffer from back pain in their lifetime. If required, a chiropractor can treat your pain through a variety of methods. These can include: spinal and joint adjustment, modalities such as ultrasound or TENS, soft tissue therapy and therapeutic exercises.

For more information or to locate a chiropractor near you, please visit the Canadian Chiropractic Association website www.chiropracticcanada.ca,

Choose right, to sleep tight!

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