

SLEEP AND ADULT ADHD

ADHD makes it harder to fall asleep and sleep well

Poor sleep makes it harder to manage your ADHD symptoms, which makes it even harder to fall asleep and sleep well. **Good routines and habits BOTH DAY AND NIGHT improve sleep.** Find routines that work for your life. Make changes if it stops working – every adult and age is different.

WHAT IS A GOOD SLEEPER?

- Good sleepers usually fall asleep within 30 minutes of lying down.
- Some may still wake up 1 or 2 times at night.
- Everyone has trouble sleeping 1 or 2 nights now and then.
- Aim to get at least 7 hours per night and make changes as needed.

GOOD SELF-CARE HABITS FOR BETTER SLEEP

DAYTIME ROUTINES



- Set an alarm. Get up at the same time every day, even weekends.
- Do not nap if it stops you from sleeping at night. If you must nap, keep it to 30 minutes in the early afternoon.
- Get plenty of bright light and sunshine during the day, the sooner the better.
- Exercise (aerobic is best) at least 30 minutes 4 to 5 days or more every week to stress less and think more clearly. Avoid heavy exercise within 2 to 3 hours of bedtime.
- Eat healthy meals and snacks at the same time every day. Don't eat big meals close to bedtime; a small healthy snack is okay if you are hungry.
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol, especially within 4 hours of bedtime.

BEDTIME ROUTINES



- Go to bed at the same time, even on weekends.
- Set an alarm for about 90 minutes before bedtime to let you know it is time to de-stress, slow down, and prepare to sleep.
- PLAN AHEAD and avoid the urge to get “one more thing” done!
- Tackle tasks earlier before your ADHD medicine wears off.
- End the evening peacefully with low light and low activity. Turn down brightness on all device screens. Avoid exciting activities and tasks that grab your attention and are hard to stop like work assignments, video games, last minute checks of work email or social media.
- Teach yourself different ways to slow down, calm down, and fall asleep. Try something simple like picturing a day at the beach. Learn meditation, deep breathing, or relaxation techniques.

SLEEP-ONLY ZONE



- Keep a cool, dark, inviting bedroom...comfortable mattress, clean bed linens, a weighted blanket, a small night-light if needed.
- Remove distractions...no work in the bedroom, place cell phone and other electronic devices at a distance, no pets, or TV if it keeps you up.
- Get rid of the noises that bother you and find sounds that calm and relax you like a sound machine, ceiling fan, gentle music.
- Any time you can't fall asleep after 20-30 minutes, get up and go somewhere quiet with low lights. Stay off your cell phone and other electronic devices. Do something that makes you sleepy.
- Don't watch the clock in bed at night. Try a nondigital or sunrise alarm clock.

TALK TO YOUR PROVIDER if you think ADHD meds or any other prescription meds or over-the-counter products are making it hard to sleep well.

See other side for references

NOTES

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