

MindfulWork

Getting a good sleep

Sleeping well is a blessing when it's working as it should. But in a survey of 15,000 people in 2016, 64% said that they are not happy with how much sleep they get. In fact only 8% say they are completely happy with their sleep. We need at least 6 hours to wake up refreshed.

Lack of sleep affects us in many ways, from feeling physically unwell, being more anxious, to contributing to heart disease, premature ageing and road accident deaths.

Nearly 9 in 10 of young people have their mobile beside the bed.

Getting a good sleep may not be rocket science. Here are some of the things to try out:

- Keep up your mindfulness practice, especially working on 'letting go' – in particular use the out-breath to let tensions dissolve. Going to sleep is a process of letting-go of our hold on waking consciousness.
- Practice the body scan when you come home from work, or just before bed time.
- Take short naps if you need to in the daytime – for no more than 20 minutes.
- Exercise every day – even a brisk 20 minute walk in the evening may help.
- Make the room really dark – eg with black-out curtain linings
- Do not use blue light devices such as mobiles or tablets in the hour before you go to bed, and switch them off before you turn out the light.
- Keep your bedroom clutter-free.
- Practice gratitude, either by writing down 5 things you are grateful for, or bringing these to mind once you're in bed, to put a positive spin on the day that's past.
- Avoid serious discussion or arguments before bed – do this earlier.
- Go to bed earlier, before you're over-tired – and wake up earlier which makes time for mindfulness practice!
- If you wake in the night with worries, do something. For example, plug in headphones and listen to voice radio, or a long meditation talk, or soothing music.
- If sleep evades you, accept it and welcome it. Just resting in bed is doing you good. Take that time as an opportunity for mindfulness practice, such as a body scan (wishing every part of your body well as it comes to mind) or bringing attention to the breath.

Read more at <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/sleep>