

Wellbeing in the workplace,  
thriving business.

A guide to better  
sleep

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# Introduction to sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is something we all aim for, and are constantly told is imperative to a healthy lifestyle. Yet, it isn't always possible to accomplish. Many of us continue to power on through the workday, using various methods to help combat our sleep deprivation and fatigue.

Sleep is paramount to a healthy body and mind. It gives our brain and body a chance to rest and repair. Adults who sleep fewer than 6 hours a night have a 13% increase in mortality risk than those who sleep more than 7 hours per night. Increasing our sleep pattern by an additional 60-90 minutes a night, can increase the chances of a healthier and happier life.



# Rapid Eye movement









## REM

Accounts for 20% of our overall sleep time, this is when the brain is winding down from the day's activities, processing and preparing for the next day. We also dream when in REM sleep.

## Non-REM

Accounts for 80% of our overall sleep time this is where the brain is put on charge to re-energise and repair. Non-REM is also known as 'deep sleep'.

## Our need for sleep changes over our lifetime

New-born 0-3 months	Infant 4-11 months	Toddler 1-2 years	Pre-school 3-5 years	School age 6-13 years	Teenager 14-17 years	Adult 18-64 years	Older adult 65 years and over
							
14 - 17 hours	12 - 15 hours	11 - 14 hours	10 - 13 hours	9 - 11 hours	8 - 10 hours	7 - 9 hours	7 - 8 hours

# The importance of sleep



## The Mental Aspect

### Memory Loss

A lack of sleep can lead up to a 40% reduction in our ability to make memories. Whilst asleep, all of the information within the brain is transferred from the short to long-term memory, linking them with previously made memories.

### Increased risk of mental ill health

Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to irritability and anger, followed by clinical depression and anxiety disorders.

### It's the same as being drunk

Research has shown that after 20-21 hours of being awake, we are as cognitively impaired as someone who would be legally drunk behind the wheel.

## The Physical Aspect



### Improve immune system

Lack of sleep can lead to a lower immune system, resulting in a higher risk of common infections (such as the flu).

### Reduce the risk of diabetes

Studies have shown that less than 6 hours sleep per night, for more than 7 days can severely disturb the body's natural blood sugar levels to the point where health care professionals could class the individual as pre-diabetic.

### Reduce the risk of cancer

Just one night of less than 4 hours sleep can significantly reduce the immune system, which fights off cancer (up to 70%)

Can increase infertility: Lack of sleep can result in a lower level of reproductive hormones being secreted.

# Tips for improving sleep



Set a consistent wake-up time – Individuals may achieve better sleep outcomes by making sure they wake up at a consistent time.



Keep your bedroom cool – Keeping the bedroom temperature at 18.5 degrees has proven optimal for most. To fall asleep, the core body temperature needs to drop 2-3 degrees, so it is better to prepare for this when regulating the thermostat.



Keep your bedroom dark – Our bodies release melatonin when we are in the dark, a hormone vital for falling asleep.



Limit the use of electronic devices before bedtime – The use of screens in the evening may suppress people's melatonin levels, a hormone which is crucial for the control of sleeping and waking cycles.



Limit the consumption of substances which may impair sleep quality – These include caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.



Regular exercise – Regular physical activity has been demonstrated to be associated with improved sleep outcomes.



Train your brain correctly – If you lie in bed awake for more than 20 minutes, get up. If we continue to lie in bed, subconsciously we are establishing a relationship between brain and bed that means being awake, not asleep. Meaning that when we come to bed to sleep, our body will find this unnatural.