

RESTFUL SLEEP CHALLENGE



If you suffer from insomnia, this is the challenge for you. Over the next few weeks, you will experiment with several strategies for achieving restful sleep. By the end of the second week, you should have identified 3-5 strategies that are especially effective for you, and be using them consistently throughout the remainder of the challenge to achieve the quality and/or quantity of sleep that you deserve. **To complete this challenge, complete all the steps below.**

STEP 1

Read the *Restful Sleep Guide* attached below.

STEP 2

Identify a six strategies to try for 2 weeks to see if they are effective for improving your quality and quantity of sleep. Write the strategies below and rate their effectiveness.

- | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. _____ | Effectiveness Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. _____ | Effectiveness Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. _____ | Effectiveness Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. _____ | Effectiveness Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. _____ | Effectiveness Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. _____ | Effectiveness Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

STEP 3

Identify and write below 2-3 effective strategies for improving your quality and/or quantity of sleep and work to make them consistent daily habits for the remainder of the challenge.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 4

Return to the wellness.byu.edu/hm page and record my completion.

RESTFUL SLEEP GUIDE



WHY SLEEP?

Sleep plays an important role in your physical and mental health and wellbeing – it not only affects how your body function but also how you feel. You must sleep well to be well.

During sleep, your body repairs damaged tissue, builds up energy reserves, re-balances your body's fluids, and renews many of your body's systems and functions.

Although specific sleep requirements vary from person to person, most adults seem to feel and function best when they regularly get between 7-9 hours of sleep a night. Studies show that when most adults get less than 6 hours of sleep a night, long-term health is negatively impacted. Unfortunately, about 1 in 3 American adults are not getting enough sleep.

Sleep can be interrupted by many things such as stress, shift work, frequent urination, chronic pain, medications, sleep apnea, technology, and more. During the Healthy Sleep challenge, you will learn a variety of behaviors and strategies to help you get a more restful sleep.

If you aren't getting the type of refreshing sleep you want, you can take action to resolve the situation. This may mean making lifestyle changes, setting boundaries, seeing a specialist, doing a sleep study, or using an EPAP machine. Regardless of your situation, you are in control of the quantity and quality of your sleep. Take action today so you can begin having the daily renewal you need by getting quality restful sleep.

SLEEP DISORDERS

If you try the many recommendations given during this challenge and are still unsuccessful at improving the quality or quantity of your sleep, or if you suspect a deeper issue is causing your insomnia, you may want to see a specialist. There are more than 70 sleep disorders that can affect sleep. More than 40 million Americans suffer from one or more of these disorders. The four most common sleep disorders are insomnia, sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, and narcolepsy. Additional sleep problems include chronic insufficient sleep, circadian rhythm abnormalities, and "parasomnias" such as sleep walking, sleep paralysis, unmanaged depression or anxiety, and night terrors.

Some of the common signs of sleeping disorders are:

- It takes more than 30 minutes to fall asleep at night.
- You awaken frequently in the night and then have trouble falling back to sleep again.
- You don't feel well rested despite sleeping 8 or more hours a night.
- You fall asleep at inappropriate times during the day.
- You snore loudly, snort, gasp, make choking sounds or stop breathing for short periods during sleep.
- You have creeping, tingling, or crawling feelings in your legs (that is relieved by moving or massaging them) especially in the evening and when you try to fall asleep.
- You have vivid, dreamlike experiences while falling asleep or dozing.

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- You have sudden muscle weakness when angry, fearful, or laughing.
- You can't move when you first wake up.
- Your legs or arms often jerk during sleep.
- You unconsciously grind your teeth

Some of the symptoms may improve by sleeping on your side instead of your back, elevating your head while sleeping, losing weight (if needed), and managing stress. If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms on a consistent basis, and the strategies you have tried are not making a difference, you may want to seek professional help.

HABIT 1 - IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Improving your sleep environment means taking steps to make your bedroom more comfortable and conducive to sleep. Here are some simple recommendations to get you started.

1. **Make your room clean and visually appealing.** It is helpful for most people to have a bedroom that is clean, organized, and clear of clutter. Achieving this may entail removing distracting devices such as TVs, computers, or gaming devices. You can assess your decorations to see if they make you feel peaceful and calm. One way to do this is to just stand in your room and look around to see what you can do to make it more favorable for sleep.
2. **Have comfortable bedding:** Pillows, sheets, pajamas, and even your mattress can play into how well you sleep. Your mattress should be both comfortable and supportive. If your mattress is the culprit for you not getting a good night's rest, and you can't afford an appropriate mattress, there are many different types of mattress toppers, or hacks you can do to improve the comfort (such as putting a board under the mattress to make it feel firmer). Husbands and wives may need to have a slightly different set-up to accommodate for each person's comfort. You also want to make sure (when possible) that you have enough room on your mattress and that your pajamas and sheets allow you to move around easily while sleeping.
3. **Darken your room at night.** A dark room helps most people fall asleep easier. Too much light can signal your body to "wake-up" and resist sleep. This could mean having light blocking blinds, or curtains. If getting blackout blinds is not in your budget, you could put a dark plastic cover over the window or use an eye mask when going to bed. You may also want to remove bright objects from your bedroom such as fish tanks or gadgets with lights - another tip is to put your phone in another room and turn your clock to face away from the bed.
4. **Set the room to a comfortable temperature.** For most people a slightly cooler temperature around 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit is comfortable at night and helpful for sleep.
5. **Discover your optimal noise level:** some people sleep best with silence while others need some background noise like a fan, nature sounds, or soothing music. If you live in a noisy area, white noise or ambient sound can help muffle loud or distracting noises.

To Recap: Write down some things you can do to improve your sleep environment and implement them to help move you towards a more restful sleep.

HABIT 2 – MANAGE YOUR TECHNOLOGY.

Technology may be the reason you're not getting the restful sleep you need for optimum health and well-being. Technology can rob you of sleep in a variety of ways:

1. Engaging in technology may be keeping you up too late at night. If so, set a boundary for when to quit using technology in the evenings.
2. Notifications may be disrupting your sleep each time a new call, text, or Instagram post comes through. If so, turn off your cell phone, put it on silent or airplane mode, or leave it in another room when you are sleeping.
3. The backlight from technology used in the evening may be interfering with your body's production of melatonin (the hormone necessary for quality sleep). If so, Stop using technology two hours before you plan to go to sleep or use blue light canceling glasses.
4. If your router is in your bedroom, its electromagnetic waves may be interfering with your sleep or your ability to feel rested. If so, move your router out of the bedroom to another room or turn it off at night.

To Recap: Assess how technology may be robbing you of your precious sleep. Write down what boundaries or strategies you will use to better manage technology and implement them to allow for better sleep.

HABIT 3 – ESTABLISH REGULAR SLEEP SCHEDULE

If you go to bed at a different time each night, you may be confusing your body's internal clock or circadian rhythm. Your circadian rhythm refers to the biological processes that regulate your body temperature, hormone levels, sleep patterns, and the day-night cycles of most of your body functions. When this clock is out of sync, you may have problems falling asleep at night or staying awake during the day. You can take the following steps to help remedy this situation:

1. Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day (including weekends).
2. Turn on the light as soon as you get up in the morning, dim the lights an hour or so before bed and turn off the lights and keep your surroundings dark at night. This external cue of light and dark is powerful in resetting your internal clock.
3. Get at least 30 minutes of natural sunlight each day (especially in the morning). Sunlight during the day helps regulate your biological clock and keep it on track.
4. If you are going to bed too late at night and want to adjust your biological clock to an earlier schedule; you can start by going to bed at a time when you normally feel tired and then every few days creep your bedtime forward 15 minutes. Once you are going to bed and falling asleep at an appropriate time, you can establish that as your ongoing sleep schedule.

To Recap: Write down what you are going to do to create an appropriate and consistent sleep schedule and, if needed, what techniques you will use to get your biological clock back on track. Implement these strategies to establish a good sleep pattern.

HABIT 4 – CREATE A RELAXING BEDTIME ROUTINE

It is helpful to do something before bedtime that calms you down and prepares your body and mind for sleep. You will want to try a variety of things to see what works for you. Here are a few things people do to relax and unwind at the end of the day.

1. Do deep breathing exercises (deep breathing can be very effective in preparing you for sleep -it stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes a state relaxation and calmness).
2. Listen to soothing music - music has a powerful effect on your mind. Calming, peaceful music can help you to relax. You may prefer listening to sounds from nature like waves, birds, crickets or rain.
3. Do some gentle stretching or restorative Yoga
4. Meditate, or do guided imagery or other relaxation techniques. BYU CAPS has some relaxation recording on their website that you may find helpful: <https://caps.byu.edu/audio-files>
5. Go on a peaceful walk at sunset
6. Take a warm bath or shower
7. Read a book for about 20 minutes
8. Clear your mind before bedtime Write down all your worries and tasks; and set them aside until morning
9. Dim the lights about 2 hours before going to bed to help your brain start making melatonin the sleep hormone
10. Pretend you are peacefully sleeping when lay down to go to sleep

To Recap: Write down which ideas you want to try and then implement them to see which ones are effective for you. Once you find one or two that help you relax at the end of the day, incorporate them into your ongoing bedtime ritual.

HABIT 5 – CHANGE BEHAVIORS THAT SABOTAGE SLEEP

There are a variety of behaviors that can sabotage sleep. It's crazy to think that behaviors you do during the day might be negatively impacting the quality of your sleep at night. Here are a few:

- Using your bedroom as a place for work, worry, or watching TV during the day. If so you may be unintentionally causing stress or conditioning your mind and body to prepare for other activities when you want to go to sleep at night. It is a good practice to make the bedroom primarily a “sleep only” zone.
- Exercising later in the evening. If so, finish exercising at least 2 hours before you plan to go to sleep. Exercise is interesting because consistent exercise can help you fall asleep faster and sleep more restful, however when exercise is too close to bedtime the adrenaline and increased blood flow can keep you awake.
- Drinking caffeinated soda or eating chocolate later in the day. If so, don't have caffeine after 2-3pm. Caffeine can stay in your body for up to 6 hours. If you drink caffeine in the afternoon, it may be keeping you awake at night.
- Letting pets or children sleep with you. If so, set some boundaries regarding where animals or children sleep at night.

- Eating late at night, especially fatty, spicy or junk foods. If so, set a boundary for not eating 2-3 hours before bed. Dietary habits can prevent you from having a good night's sleep. Eating can wake up your body and give you a big boost of energy or give you an upset stomach right as you are trying to settle down for the night. If, however, you are feeling hungry or thirsty it can be beneficial to eat something small to take away the discomfort.
- Napping a lot during the day. If so, limit your napping to one 20-30 min nap and train yourself to sleep primarily at night. A short nap during the day may help refresh you but if you are taking long naps or needing frequent naps, your body is telling you that you need to get a more restful sleep during the night.

To Recap: Evaluate your behaviors to see if you are inadvertently doing something that may be sabotaging your sleep. If so, write down what you will do to change and then implement that change for a few weeks to see if it makes a difference.