

Sleep Tips for Children and Teens

Getting enough sleep can help improve:

- Attention
- Behavior
- Learning
- Memory
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Healing from an illness or injury

Below are ways to help get the best sleep possible.

In the Room Where You Sleep

Keep it cool

Your body and brain cool down before and during sleep. You don't want to be too warm.

Things to help you stay at a comfortable temperature (but on the cooler side):

- A fan
- Air conditioning
- Closing curtains during the day
- Natural fiber sheets and pajamas (like cotton)
- Turn down thermostat at night

Keep it quiet

Things that can help block out noise from outside or the rest of the house:

- White noise machine
- Fan
- Soft music

Keep it dark

A dark room helps your brain sleep better. If you need some light, use a small, dim night light as far away from your eyes as possible.

Bedding

You will sleep better in a bed that is comfortable and big enough so you can move around.

Follow a Bedtime Routine Every Night

Bedtime routines are the things that you do every night before bed. These help you relax and get ready to sleep.

- Consistent, easy to follow routines are best
- A bedtime routine should be 30 minutes or less (it may be longer if you shower/take a bath at night)
- Try writing down your routine so you remember it
- Avoid screens at least 30 minutes before bed. This includes TV, tablets, phones, and video games. Some things you could do instead: read, draw, or listen to music

Getting Enough Sleep

Below is the average amount of sleep you should get. Don't worry if you need a little more or less.

Age	Hours (including naps)
3-5 years	10-13 hours
6-12 years	9-11 hours
13-17 years	8-10 hours

Sleep Schedule

You should try to go to bed and wake up (get out of bed) at the same time every day. This can be hard on weekends, so at least try to stay within 1 hour of your normal bedtime and wake up time.

Nutrition and Sleep

Caffeine

- Avoid caffeine, if possible, especially after 12:00 PM
- Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, chocolate, chocolate milk, some chewing gum and candy

Eating before sleep

- Try not to eat right before bed, but don't go to bed hungry
- Instead, a small, healthy snack between dinnertime and bedtime can keep you from being hungry when you sleep

Activity and Sleep

Regular physical activity during the day like walking, riding a bike, swimming, or playing with friends can help you fall asleep faster and sleep longer.

- Try to be active at least 30 minutes a day
- Try **not** to be active right before bed. That may make it harder to fall asleep

Mental Health and Sleep

Your mental health affects your sleep. Many teens report that being stressed out makes it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. Talk with your health care team about any concerns, such as:

- Stress

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others

Medical Sleep Concerns

Talk with your health care team about any concerns about sleep quality such as:

- Moving a lot while sleeping
- Snoring, gasping for breath, or other breathing issues
- Sleep terrors
- Sleepwalking
- Not feeling refreshed even after enough sleep

Resources for Children, Teens, and Caregivers:

- **Sleeping Through the Night, Revised Edition: How Infants, Toddlers and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night's Sleep**, by Jodi Mindell
- **Take Charge of Your Child's Sleep: The All-in-one Resource for Solving Sleep Problems in Kids and Teens**, by Judith Owens and Jodi A. Mindell
- **babysleep.com**. Expert-driven comprehensive resources for parents with infants, toddlers, and school aged children who have difficulty sleeping.
- **The Insomnia Workbook for Teens: Skills to Help You Stop Stressing and Start Sleeping Better**, by Monique A. Thompson.
- **Mindfulness for Teens in 10 Minutes a Day: Exercises to Feel Calm, Stay Focused & Be Your Best Self**, by Jennie Marie Battistin MA LMFT
- <https://www.mindfulnessforteens.com/>
- **Sitting still like a frog, mindfulness exercises for kids**, by Eline Snel.
- <https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids/>

References:

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<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/bedroom-environment/how-to-design-the-ideal-bedroom-for-sleep>

<https://www.babysleep.com/news/to-help-children-sleep-go-dark/>

<https://aasm.org/resources/pdf/pediatricsleepdurationconsensus.pdf>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/eating-before-bed#1>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/exercising-for-better-sleep>

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/children-and-sleep/bedtime-routine>

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2013/sleep>