

SLEEP ADVICE DURING EXAMS



IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT STUDENTS GET A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP WHILST THEY ARE REVISING FOR THEIR EXAMS.

RESEARCH HAS PROVEN THAT SLEEPS PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN CONSOLIDATING MEMORY AND IN FILTERING INFORMATION YET TEENAGERS OFTEN SKIMP ON VITAL SLEEP AS THEY CRAM FOR EXAMS

IF THEY ARE WELL RESTED THEY WILL LEARN MORE EFFECTIVELY, BE MORE FOCUSED AND ULTIMATLEY PERFORM BETTER IN THEIR EXAMS

SO GET A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!

THE BUILD UP TO EXAMS CAN BE A PARTICULARLY STRESSFUL TIME SO HERE ARE A FEW TIPS ON HOW TO SURVIVE

HOW MUCH SLEEP? Most teenagers need between 8-9 hours sleep every night.



Try to keep this consistent during the weekend and holiday periods as consistency is the key. Use a sleep diary to keep track.

Think about the environment you sleep in. See bedroom check list for more tips.

BE PREPARED. Make a revision timetable. The earlier you start revising the less stressed and anxious you will feel. You are less likely to feel the need to stay up late in to the night cramming. Cramming is counter- productive as it limits access to REM sleep which is essential for storing memory.

Having a plan that you feel is manageable allows you to relax more easily.

CAFFEINE. Avoid caffeine before bedtime as it is a stimulant. It stays in the body for up to 12 hours and can reduce your quality of sleep. Aim to use herbal alterative during the day.



GET PHYSICAL. Exercising on a regular basis is good for our physical and mental health. Often this area is neglected when you are preparing for exams. Being active for 30mins during the day can help ensure you get a good night's sleep- just make sure it is not too close to your bedtime. This could include attending a regular activity or team sport or simply involve walking to and from school or walking the dog.



EAT WELL. Having a healthy diet can help in maintaining your energy levels during the day. Some food such as oily fish, green vegetables and nuts boost concentration and others such as dark chocolate and blueberries reduce stress. Avoid sugary snacks before bedtime. It is also best to avoid having an empty or full tummy before you go to sleep.



TAKE A BREAK. Make sure you build in breaks to your revision schedule. If you don't you may also find it difficult to switch off at the end of the day. Make sure you spend some time outside during the day when revising. Fresh air can help. Get some oxygen to your brain!

SOCIALISE. Getting together with friends is a good way of letting off steam. Chatting with others who are having the same experience can help you feel better. Make sure you have your priorities right when studying for exams. This should be a reward for when you have your school work done.

AVOID BLUE LIGHT. Blue light emitting from computers/phones will disturb sleep by activating the release of cortisol. Make sure you get into the habit of turning off all devices at least 30 mins before you go to bed. Leave them outside your bedroom at night so you are not tempted to respond to messages during the night.



POWER NAPS. Research suggests that a 10minute power nap can boost alertness and problem solving ability. When you are home revising, if you are flagging after lunch it is Ok to have a short nap. Just remember to set an alarm!

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES. After a full day revising it is difficult for your brain to know when to switch off. When you have finished studying for the day do something else to help you unwind. To create a sense of calm before you go to bed listen to soothing music or practice Mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing.



DONT WORRY. Feeling worried about the outcome of your exams is normal. How you deal with these worries will determine how much they affect you. Try sharing your fears with an adult during the day rather than keeping them to yourself.

Keep a journal next to your bed to write down any worries or a to- do list for the day ahead so you don't spend the night thinking about these. Try to do this half an hour before lights out.



EXAM TIME

- Do go to bed at your usual time the night before an exam.
- Avoid cramming the night before- a good night sleep is going to be of more benefit
- Do some exercise. It is destressing, improves quality of sleep
- Drink plenty of water during the day.
- Make sure you have a good breakfast on the morning of your exam. Eggs are good for protein for alertness or wholegrain carbs such as porridge for mental energy. A fruit smoothie is also good idea.

GENERAL SLEEP TIPS FOR TEENAGERS

There is a great deal of emphasis on teaching teens about healthy eating and exercise but not enough on the importance of a good night's sleep. Sleep problems can be a very serious issue and lack of sleep has been linked to obesity, depression and impaired learning. Try talking to your teenager

Emphasise the importance of sleep and the physical and psychological benefits of sleep.

Establishing a regular routine when you do the same things in the same order before you go to bed can help. This might include having a bath, reading a book and making sure you have your school bag ready for the day ahead.

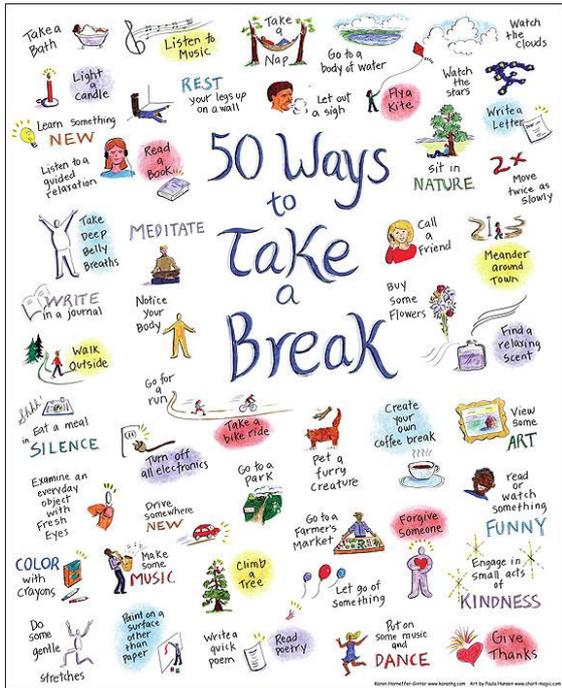
Limit drinks which contain caffeine before bed time such as fizzy drinks as well as tea and coffee. Try herbal teas, hot chocolate or warm milk.

Make sure they have a comfortable bed and the environment is dark, cool and quiet.

Keep a sleep diary. Making a note of how much sleep you are getting and the activities you are doing during the day can help identify the nature of the problem. It is also useful to record what changes you are making and monitor if your sleep improves.

FURTHER ADVICE

- If you are worried that your teenager is having ongoing sleep problems you can speak to your GP or the school nurse.
- For sleep diaries and relaxation techniques
Visit www.mymind.org.uk or Visit www.getselfhelp



FOODS THAT REDUCE STRESS

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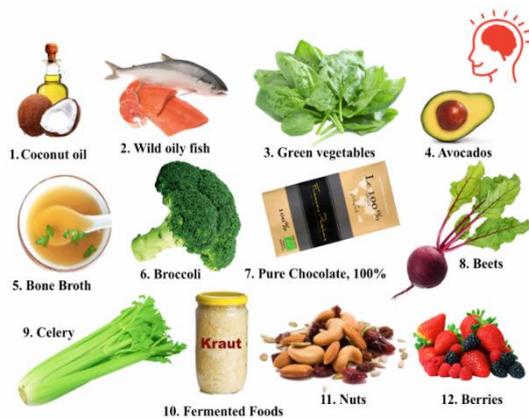
GOOD LUCK!

Get some sleep!

Teenagers need 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night for optimal health!

- Go to bed at the same time. Our bodies like routine!
- Establish a relaxing bedtime ritual.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing (not a stressed-out work zone).
- Unplug and turn off screens at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Silence your cell phone notifications and don't sleep with your phone. Put it on your night stand! (Your phone alarm will still work in "do not disturb" mode).
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime. If hungry, eat a light, healthy snack.
- Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening.

Sleep is the best meditation
– Dalai Lama



FOODS THAT HELP CONCENTRATION

