



Sleep

A good night's sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is a one of life's great pleasures. Sleep also serves a number of important functions, helping our bodies to repair tissue, store memories, and re-energise. Indeed having poor sleep can make studying a lot harder as sleep impacts on our brain's ability to learn new information, remember details, problem solve and concentrate.

Most adults need 7-8 hours a night, but this can vary from 6-10 hours. Younger people in their adolescence and early 20s generally need more sleep.



How can I get a better night's sleep?

There are a number of different strategies that people can use to improve sleep. These strategies have been supported by research findings and sleep studies so they are definitely worth a try!

Develop regular sleep patterns

Wake at the same time each day (this is more important than going to bed at the same time each day).

Exercise, but not too late at night

Exercise can help your body to release nervous energy, and help you relax.

Change what you're doing before bed

In the final few hours before bed, avoid the following: alcohol, caffeine, heavy meals, study and strenuous exercise. Have a bedtime routine so that your body knows it is time to wind-down. Try to do something relaxing such as read a novel or listen to music.

Get some bright light in the morning

Exposing yourself to sunshine helps your brain to know when it is morning. This will then help you get to sleep at night. Try going for a short morning walk or eating breakfast outside.

Resist the urge to clock-watch

Put your clock where you can't see it from your bed. Clock watching usually just causes more stress.

Use your bed for sleeping (or sex) only

Avoid doing other things in your bed like watching television or studying. Otherwise your bed will become associated with these activities.

Resist the urge to sleep-in

People will often sleep-in to compensate for lost sleep. Even though it feels cosy, sleeping in will upset your body clock, and make it harder to get to sleep the next night. It is a better strategy to maintain the same waking time, and get to bed earlier if you're tired.

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Don't worry about your lack of sleep

Of course it's important to get a good nights' sleep, but telling yourself that you must get to sleep, or that you will not be able to function if you can't sleep will probably just make you more stressed. Instead, consider the most likely consequences. E.g. "If I don't sleep, I might not be able to concentrate as well, but I'll be able to at least get some easier essay-related work done by looking for research articles". Or "If I don't sleep, I will be tired tomorrow, but I have coped with that before, and still managed to take some notes in the lecture".

Postpone your worries

Do you find yourself worrying instead of sleeping? If so, delegate a time earlier in the evening to think about your worries, and problem-solve anything that can be solved. When worries pop into your head in bed, postpone the worry until your worry time the next day, and think of something boring instead (e.g. try to think of all the items in your kitchen draw).

Still having problems?

See our website for links to sleep apps and other websites. Or come and see us at the counselling service to discuss your difficulties with sleep. Sometimes sleep problems can be related to other issues that need sorting out like depression and anxiety.

Seeing your GP is also important if you continue to have sleep problems.

Where are we?

The main Counselling centre is at the South Street Campus on Bush Court. We also have some counselling available at Peel.

Email for all campuses:

counsellingservice@murdoch.edu.au

South Street Campus

Social Sciences Building 440 (Bush Court)

Phone: (08) 9360 1227

Hours: 8.30am – 4.30pm

Peel Campus Student Centre

Phone: (08) 9582 5501

Hours: 8.30am – 4.30pm