

SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep is a crucial part of good mental health. Everyone needs different amounts of sleep, however a common recommendation is 7-9 hours. Not getting enough sleep can increase anxiety and low mood over time, and can often result in irritability, poor concentration and poor judgement. Not getting enough quality sleep? Check out the ideas below for some simple ways to improve your sleep.

- 1 Get regular.** One of the best ways to train your body to sleep well is to go to bed and get up around the same time every day, even on weekends and days off.
- 2 Sleep when sleepy.** Only try to sleep when you actually feel tired or sleepy, rather than spending too much time awake in the bed.
- 3 Get up & try again.** If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 20 minutes, get up and do something calming or relaxing until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again.
- 4 Use a sleep diary.** Keeping a diary around sleep for a few days or a week can help you identify good and bad habits that may help or interrupt sleep.
- 5 Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep. If you use bed as a place to watch TV, work, eat, and other things, this will interrupt the association between the bed and sleep.
- 6 Avoid naps.** It is best to avoid taking naps during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bedtime and to reinforce a clear routine around sleep.
- 7 Sleep rituals.** You can develop your own bedtime routine to remind your body that it is time to sleep - some people find it useful to do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises before bed each night, having a warm shower or bath, or to have a cup of caffeine-free tea.
- 8 No clock-watching.** Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the time during the night can wake you up and reinforces negative thoughts.
- 9 A calm space.** It is very important that your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is best, and make sure you have curtains or an eye mask to block out early morning light and earplugs if there is disturbing noise outside your room.