

How can I improve my sleeping habits?

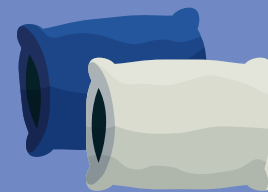
Sleep Hygiene is about making and keeping habits that leave you feeling well-rested and energised. Here are some of our top tips!

Try this:

- Set and stick to a sleep schedule (including weekends, if possible!)
- Expose yourself to daylight throughout the day (preferably before 10AM!)
- Keep your bed and sleeping environment comfortable and inviting
- Create a nightly bed-time routine to help you relax and wind down for sleep
- Soft music, ambient sounds, or podcasts before sleeping
- Relaxation techniques like breathing exercises, meditation, or mindfulness

Avoid this:

- Rushing into your daily routine as soon as you wake up
- Drinking caffeine close to bed-time
- Skipping sleep to work, study, socialize or exercise
- Using screens or digital devices at least 30 minutes before sleeping
- Having your dinner later than 3-4 hours before bed-time
- Staying in bed if you cannot sleep



For more information about how you can lead a healthier lifestyle, visit hpd.gov.mt, or contact the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate on **2326 6000** or send an e-mail on healthpromotion.hpd@gov.mt

Sleep Well

Tips for Improved Sleeping Habits



Sleep is a fundamental part of our wellbeing – **there is no other state of wakefulness that provides the same benefits that sleep does.**

We spend around 1/3 of our lives asleep. During sleep, our body and mind are recharged, leaving us fresh and alert when we wake up.

Sleep also supports our physical health and helps us to fight off diseases or avoid injuries. A lack of sleep can lead to higher risks of physical or mental issues. For children and teenagers, sleep is particularly important for growth and development.



STAGE 1

typically 1-5 minutes

The body relaxes, whilst heart-rate and breathing slow down. Mental activity also begins to decrease.

STAGE 2

typically 10-60 minutes

Body temperature drops and brain activity continues to slow down, but it is still much easier to be woken up during these first two stages.



Our **'sleep architecture'** refers to the structure of our sleep stages and cycles.

We actually go through several sleep cycles in a single night, each lasting between 70 and 120 minutes.

STAGE 4

typically 10-60 minutes

Also called Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep and is when memory and learning are mostly consolidated. Activity in the brain increases significantly, and the body becomes immobile except for eyes and breathing muscles. Dreams usually happen during this stage.

STAGE 3

typically 20-40 minutes

This is the deepest stage of sleep where the body does most of its rest and recovery work. This stage is also important for clear reasoning and long-term memory.

How much is enough?

There is no set rule as to how much sleep you might need, as long as you get good quality sleep on a regular basis. **Good quality and uninterrupted sleep leaves you feeling refreshed and ready for the day.**

However, research has found that getting less than 7 hours of sleep is linked with poorer mental and physical health in adults. People who regularly get less than 7 hours of sleep are more likely to gain weight, be less productive, get into an accident, or suffer from chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and depression.

Signs you may not be getting the sleep you need

Waking up feeling like you need more sleep, not quite ready for the day

Having trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep

Having difficulties with memory and concentration

Finding it difficult to make decisions and judgments

Feeling more stressed

Experiencing low moods or irritability



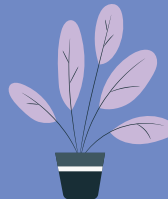
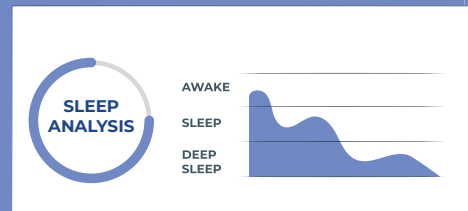
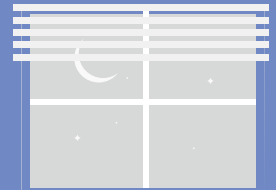
How to evaluate our sleep

Understanding your sleeping pattern is the first step to making the changes you need. Keeping a sleep diary will help to do just that!

With a sleep diary, you can record when you go to bed, how long you sleep, and any factors or activities that might be influencing your sleep cycle and quality. Then, you can make the changes you need to help you sleep better!

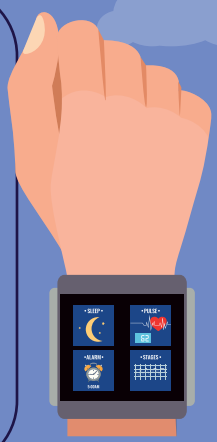
Log the type of day (e.g. work, school, day off), any caffeine, medications, alcohol, exercise, or napping throughout the day, and your stress levels. Eventually, you will have an overview of your sleep-related habits and how these might be affecting your sleep times and sleep quality.

If you notice your sleeping pattern is interfering with your day-to-day life or causing you distress, speak to your doctor for support. You can even keep this information to show your healthcare provider if you ever need to.



Date	When I Slept	Duration	Quality	Notes

Tech-Savvy? Smartphone applications and smartwatches have become popular tools to help self-monitor your sleep. They can track patterns in your movement and heart rate and can provide additional information about the duration of your sleep cycles. Remember to put your devices on 'Sleep Mode' at night!



On a scale from 1 to 5, rate your sleep quality on this day



Write about activities like physical exercise, napping, caffeine intake or medications here

