

How to sleep better for children and young people: tips



1. Set up a bedtime routine

A regular [bedtime routine](#) starting around the same time each night encourages good sleep patterns. A routine of bath, story and bed can help younger children feel ready for sleep. For older children, the routine might include a quiet chat with someone about the day then some time alone relaxing before lights out. What would work for you?

2. Keep regular sleep and wake times

Keep bedtimes and wake-up times within 1-2 hours of each other each day. This helps to keep your body clock in a regular pattern. It's a good idea for weekends and holidays, as well as school days.

3. Stop napping

Stop napping. If you still nap during the day, try to keep the nap to no longer than 20 minutes and no later than early afternoon. Longer and later naps can make it harder for you to get to sleep at night.

4. Make sure you feel safe at night

If you feel scared about going to bed or being in the dark, avoiding scary TV shows, movies and computer games can help. Some children with bedtime fears feel better when they have a night light.

5. Check noise and light in your bedroom

A quiet, dimly lit space is important for good sleep. Check whether your bedroom is too light or noisy.

6. Avoid the clock – Don't look or check it.

Set an alarm for the morning and then don't check the clock.

7. Eat the right amount at the right time and avoid caffeine

Feeling hungry or too full before bed can make you more alert or uncomfortable. This can make it harder for you to get to sleep. In the morning, a [healthy breakfast](#) helps to kick-start your body clock at the right time. Avoid sugary drinks and sweets in the evening and avoid caffeine in energy drinks, coffee, tea, chocolate and cola. It keeps you awake!!

8. Get plenty of natural light and exercise in the daytime.

Get as much natural light as possible during the day, especially in the morning. Bright light suppresses melatonin. This helps you feel awake and alert during the day and sleepy towards bedtime, it is hard at the moment but try to get out into a garden if you have one and open curtains and windows. Our bodies need plenty of exercise to be tired and this helps you to sleep. Don't exercise too near to bed time as it can make you more awake.

9. Put screens down an hour before bed, do another relaxing activity.

Blue light from televisions, computer screens, phones and tablets might suppress [melatonin](#) levels and delay sleepiness. It probably helps to turn these off at least one hour before bedtime and to keep screens out of your bedroom at night. Older children might like to wind down by reading a book, listening to gentle music or practising [breathing for relaxation](#). If you take longer than 30 minutes to fall asleep, you might need a longer wind-down time before turning the lights out to go to sleep.

10. Save your bed for sleeping only.

Help your mind connect your bed with sleep only, don't do other things in bed such as play computer or phone games, or watching telly. Keep bed for sleeping.