

KEY STRATEGIES to enact **NOW** SleepFit

Commitment is key to changing sleep habits

- Sleep is critical to good health. You need to think about it and plan for the best chance of success.
- Lack of sleep can affect judgement, mood, memory and may increase the risk of a serious accidents and injury.
- Chronic sleep deprivation may lead to a host of health problems including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, even early mortality.

STEP 1



Re-think your relationship
with sleep

STEP 2



Commit to good
sleeping habits

STEP 3



Get help sooner rather
than later



STRATEGY 1 - Your sleep schedule

The body's internal clock works best if there is a regular sleep pattern.

1

Schedule. Your body LOVES routine. Respect your bedtime and have the same getting up time during the work week regardless of sleep. The body's internal clock works best if there is a regular sleep pattern.

2

Routine. Have a relaxing bedtime routine as a habit: avoid stimulating activities such as, computer games, television, blue light in general an hour before bed.

3

The 20 minute rule. If you are not asleep within approximately 20 minutes, or if you wake up in the middle of the night and you have been awake for what seems like more than 20 minutes.....GET UP!
Go to another room, quietly read a book or listen to some relaxing music until you feel a "dip" in energy that tells you it's time to go back to sleep. Only then go back to your bedroom and bed.

4

Naps. A 10-20 minute nap is ideal - it will deliver a three hour energy uplift.



STRATEGY 2 - Your Bedroom

Invest the time and energy into this space and you will reap the rewards. Make your bedroom a place to look forward to, a retreat for rest and rejuvenation.

1

Your bedroom. Your bedroom is for two things and two things only; and one is none of our business. Remove all other distractions from your bedroom like your television, desk, computer, tablet and mobile phones.

2

Your bed. Your bed, mattress, pillows and blankets must be comfortable, warm, inviting and restful. Your bed is your foundation, the important thing is to experiment until you get it right.

3

Temperature. Poor sleepers often report feeling hot. The ideal temperature for your bedroom is between 18-21 degrees Celsius.

4

Noise & Light. Reduce noise as much as possible. You may need to close a window or wear earplugs to minimise noise. Most people sleep best in a completely darkened room. Covering windows with block out blinds or sleeping with an eye mask will help. Experiment with what will work for you. A dark room is very important for people doing shift work.



STRATEGY 3 - Your Lifestyle

Everyday lifestyle habits will have a big impact on sleep as they directly affect energy levels and our ability to wind down and get to sleep.

1

Caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant and an energy booster. It is great for the morning but not so good at night. It is best to have no more than 200mg per day, say two caffeinated drinks. Try to avoid caffeine after lunch or as a minimum, at least 5-6 hours prior to bedtime.

2

Alcohol & Nicotine. Although alcohol will make you feel sleepy and may help you fall asleep at night, it disrupts your sleep later in the night. It is best to avoid alcohol at least 4 hours before bed. Binge drinking will affect your levels of melatonin for up to a week. Nicotine is a stimulant that operates in a similar way to caffeine and is an energy booster.

3

Diet. What and when we eat will affect our energy and our sleep. It goes without saying that the healthier and more balanced our diet, the better. Going to bed on a full stomach will impact our sleep as our body works at digesting the food.

4

Exercise. Studies have found that people sleep significantly better and feel more alert during the day if they exercise. Exercise energises you, it's best not done right before bedtime. If you haven't exercised for a long time, it may be a good idea to talk to your GP first.



STRATEGY 4 - Your Thoughts

Poor sleep is often the outcome of persistent negative thoughts. Such thoughts can create stress and anxiety which result in continued trouble getting to or staying asleep. Negative sleep patterns may develop and continue for years if not treated.

1

The worry cycle. How you react to your thoughts will impact your sleep. Negative thoughts create negative emotions and soon, just thinking about going to bed can trigger worry and anxiety.

The thought of going to bed may trigger a feeling of "Oh no, I bet I'm not going to sleep again tonight". The anxiety and stress created means sleep can elude you and a vicious cycle develops.

2

How to break the cycle? - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Cognitive behavioural therapy is the gold standard for changing thoughts and behaviours. Recent studies have shown that online cognitive behavioural therapy programs are just as effective as face to face psychology sessions. Contact SleepFit through the app if you are interested in cognitive behavioural therapy.