



Getting Good Sleep

Inspire Workplaces Calendar, March 2021

World Sleep Day is marked annually on the 19th March – advocating the importance of sleep for achieving “an optimal quality of life and improving global health.”

Why does sleep matter?

Sleep is at the heart of physical and mental health. It is essential for tissue repair, cell regeneration, immune functioning, memory functioning and consolation, and for the regulation of emotion.

As our daily routines are severely disrupted because of COVID-19, with people working from home (and some their bedrooms), it is to be expected that many of us are having trouble sleeping. Add to this, the stress and uncertainty of job loss, which some may be facing and fears for their health and that of their loved ones.

We may be using unhealthy habits of coping like alcohol and food to manage our anxiety levels, or spending more time on social media to cope with lockdown.

This is completely understandable, and we are all responding to this crisis in different ways.

However, improving our sleep habits during lockdown will help us to adjust and cope better, with lasting wellbeing benefits to our physical and mental health.

Here are some quick tips to a good night's sleep:

- **Exercise at some point during the day** – not too close to bedtime.
- **Reserve your bed for sleep and sex** – not for work or TV.
- **Keep the bedroom comfortable** – cool, dark and quiet.
- **Start a sleep ritual** – and where possible, establish a consistent schedule and routine.
- **If you can, spend some time outside in natural light** – as an added bonus, it's an opportunity to get fresh air.
- **Have a bedtime snack** – but not too much.
- **Avoid alcohol**, caffeine and chocolate before bed.
- **Wind down** before going to bed.
- **Mindfulness, meditation and relaxation exercises** can enhance sleep quality – check out the apps available from the app store / google play.
- **Don't clock watch if you're not sleeping** – consider removing your clock from the bedroom.
- **Lying awake for more than 20mins?** Try getting up, and then re-settle back into bed to help reduce negative thought patterns.

NB: some sleep disturbance is normal, especially at times of stress, however if it persists you may wish to contact your GP or a therapist.

Useful links:

Mental Health Foundation. The Mental Health Foundation promotes the impact of sleep on our mental health. Website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

British Sleep Society. The British Sleep Society is a charity for medical, scientific and healthcare workers dealing with sleeping disorders in the UK. Website: www.sleepsociety.org.uk

British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association. The British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping snorers and their bed partners improve their sleep. Website: www.britishtsnoring.co.uk

www.irishsleepsociety.org/links.htm

Books:

Espie CA (2006) **Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioral Techniques.** London: Constable & Robinson Ltd (Paperback).

Espie CA (2011) **An Introduction to Coping with Sleep Problems.** London: Constable & Robinson Ltd (Booklet).

Glovinsky P, Spielman A (2006) **The Insomnia Answer: A Personalized Program for Identifying and Overcoming the Three Types of Insomnia.** Perigee Trade.

Walker M (2018) **Why We Sleep.** 1st edition. Penguin

The Inspire Support Hub contains a range of information tailored to support your wellbeing, including resources dedicated to Sleep. Visit: inspiresupporthub.org

You can also speak with a member of our specially trained support team via your EAP. Speak to your HR or wellbeing team for details.