



**Canadian Mental Health Association** British Columbia

# GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP $z^z$

Not sleeping well or enough? Many people find that their mental and physical health improves when they prioritize sleep and take action to manage sleep problems. Try some of the small strategies below:

## Avoid caffeine close to bedtime

Caffeine gives you energy, which isn't helpful when you're trying to wind down and fall asleep. It can be found in coffee, some teas, chocolate, energy drinks, soft drinks, and some medications.

# Avoid alcohol close to bedtime

It might seem like alcohol helps you fall asleep, but it disrupts the deep, restful sleep that makes you feel refreshed in the morning.

#### Take time to unwind

Stress has a big impact on sleep, so it's important to take some time to relax before bed. TV, videos or smartphones can negatively affect sleep, so limit screen time before bed.

#### Exercise

Research shows that people who exercise regularly have deeper sleep (but it's best to exercise earlier in the day).

# Follow a routine

Try to keep the same sleep and wake schedule every day—including weekends.

# Avoid naps-if they cause problems

If you do nap, try to keep them 30 minutes or less, and cut out naps completely if you experience sleep problems at night.

## Avoid going to bed to hungry or too full

Try to avoid large meals before bedtime. If you're hungry at bedtime, try a light, healthy snack.

#### Get up if you don't fall asleep in 30 minutes

Trying too hard to sleep usually backfires! Instead, get out of bed and do something relaxing until you feel drowsy.

## Make your bedroom comfortable

Use your bedroom only for sleeping—not working or studying.

## Let go of the idea that your sleep *must* be perfect

Most people can get through the next day if they feel a little bit tired (unless that puts people in danger, of course). Worrying about your sleep only makes it harder to sleep well.

If you often have problems falling asleep or staying asleep, often wake up feeling tired, or often feel so tired that it affects your daily activities, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor.

Find more tips and a sleep skills diary in the Getting a Good Night's Sleep Wellness Module at www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-modules