

The Importance of Sleep and Physical Activity

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What Does the Research Say?





From US News and World Report

Research has found a clear link between sleep deprivation and [teenage depression](#) and [anxiety](#).



University of Arkansas Study

Furthermore, lack of sleep can wreak havoc with adolescents' already turbulent emotions.



Sleep Foundation

Teens are already at risk for poor emotional self-regulation; in adolescents, the prefrontal cortex – the portion of the brain that controls self-regulation – is underdeveloped. Lack of sleep adds fuel to the fire.



Other Potential Results

Poor school performance

“Sleep plays a critical role in thinking and learning. Lack of sleep hurts these cognitive processes in many ways. First, it impairs attention, alertness, concentration, reasoning, and problem solving. This makes it more difficult to learn efficiently.” WebMD



Other Potential Results

Risk of substance abuse

“Along with regulating emotions, the prefrontal cortex also regulates executive functioning – decision-making and impulse control. As a result, teens who get less sleep tend to engage more frequently in risky behaviors.

Research shows that ongoing lack of sleep can increase teens' likelihood of [using drugs and alcohol](#). A 2015 study found that sleep difficulties and hours of sleep can predict a number of dangerous adolescent behaviors, including binge drinking, drunk driving and unprotected sex.” US News and World Report



Other Potential Results

Physical Appearance and Further Health Concerns

“Cause you to eat too much or eat unhealthy foods like sweets and fried foods that lead to weight gain

Make you more prone to pimples. Lack of sleep can contribute to acne and other skin problems

May increase intake of caffeine and or nicotine” (causing an unhealthy cycle)

Sleep Foundation



Physical Activity

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition recommend that children and adolescents ages 6 to 17 years do 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily

- Less than one-quarter (24%) of children 6 to 17 years of age participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. ⁸
- In 2017, only 26.1% of high school students participate in at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity on all 7 days of the previous week.⁹



Benefits to Physical Activity

Regular physical activity can help children and adolescents improve cardiorespiratory fitness, build strong bones and muscles, control weight, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and reduce the risk of developing health conditions such as:¹

- Heart disease.
- Cancer.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Osteoporosis.
- Obesity.



Mental Health Benefits to Physical Activity

1. Help for depression and anxiety
 - Releases endorphins and produces feelings of happiness and euphoria
2. Decreased stress
 - Increasing your heart rate can actually reverse stress-induced brain damage.
3. Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
 - Physical achievements can lead to boosts of confidence and self-esteem
4. Better sleep
 - Physical activity increases body temperature, which can have calming effects on the mind. Exercise also helps regulate your circadian rhythm.
5. Brain boost
 - Cardiovascular exercise creates new brain cells—a process called neurogenesis—and improve overall brain performance. Physical activity boosts creativity and mental energy

Walden University

(<https://www.waldenu.edu/online-bachelors-programs/bs-in-psychology/resource/five-mental-benefits-of-exercise>)



Nature and EMDR

- Dr. Francine Shapiro- late 80s received distressing news, became very sad, went out for walk in nature, and realized by the time her walk was over, she felt better. Started asking herself why this was. Being a doctor- Chose to research it- Found that the way the light and shadows and movement outside in nature interact have us constantly looking left and right and left and right, back and forth. Making sure you don't trip and fall.
- Bilateral stimulation retrains and reprograms and re processes the brain
- Used with those who have experienced even intense traumas. We are in a stressful and uncertain time, while some may be experiencing more traumatic changes, others are still stressed and uncertain.

Recommendations





From Sleep Foundation

Make your room a sleep haven. Keep it cool, quiet and dark. If you need to, get eyeshades or blackout curtains. Let in bright light in the morning to signal your body to wake up.

If you **do the same things every night before you go to sleep**, you teach your body the signals that it's time for bed. Try to go to bed at about the same time every night.

Make your room a sleep haven. Keep it cool, quiet and dark. If you need to, get eyeshades or blackout curtains. Let in bright light in the morning to signal your body to wake up.



From Canadian Pediatric Society

Have a relaxing bedtime routine. Have a light snack (such as a glass of milk) before bed. Take a shower, read a book or meditate.

Always fall asleep in your bed. Use your bed for sleeping only. Avoid doing homework, using a smartphone or tablet, or playing video games while in bed. Try to be in your bed with the lights out for at least 8 hours every night.

Napping during the day can make it difficult to fall asleep. If you want to nap, keep it short (less than 30 minutes). Definitely don't nap after dinner.

Get exercise every day, but avoid very hard exercise in the evening.



Continued

Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks), especially after mid-afternoon. Don't use any products to help you sleep such as alcohol, herbal products or over-the-counter sleep aids.

Limit screen time before bed. Using electronic media and being exposed to the screen's light before trying to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.

On weekends, no matter how late you go to bed, try to **get up within 2 hours to 4 hours of your usual wake time.** This is especially important if you have trouble falling asleep on Sunday nights.

Make sure you are not trying to do too much. Do you still have some time for fun and to get enough sleep?

If you are having trouble sleeping because you have too much on your mind, try keeping a diary or to-do lists. If you write things down before sleep, you may feel less worried or stressed.



From US News and World Report

Get up at the same time every day. A [consistent sleep schedule](#) will help teens regulate their sleep rhythms. If they do sleep later on weekends, it should only be for an hour or so more than usual.

Take naps when possible. Sleep experts recommend midday naps and other short bursts of sleep. In fact, studies show that deep sleep can help us function optimally, even if it's just a half-hour nap.

Unplug earlier. Along with keeping teens occupied late into the night, smartphones detract from sleep via the [artificial light](#) they emit, which stimulates more cortisol (the hormone that tells the brain to be alert and productive) than the sun itself.


Exercise. Research shows that people sleep significantly better and feel more alert during the day if they get at least 150 minutes of exercise a week.

Do yoga. Doing yoga before bed helps people fall asleep more easily and sleep longer. One study showed that young adults who regularly practiced yoga woke up fewer times in the night – a sign of better sleep quality.

Avoid sugar at night. Sugar destabilizes our glucose levels, creating a burst of energy. That's followed by a drop in blood sugar that, in turn, stimulates the release of adrenaline and cortisol – waking us up in the wee hours.



**What gets in the way of
sleep for your teens?
Often, it's phone use and
time management.**



**Be Good Role Models and
Remember Long Term
Sleep Problems Can Be
Even More Harmful**