

Sleep

A short guide



About this guide

This short guide contains tips and ideas to help you get a good night's sleep.

You might need to try a few different things before you find what works for you.

We've also included a two-week sleep diary, so you can record your sleep habits. If you have trouble sleeping, this could help you understand what might be affecting your sleep.

How much should I be sleeping?

The amount of sleep you need depends on your age, lifestyle, diet and environment.

As a general rule of thumb, a healthy adult needs seven to eight hours of sleep. Babies, children and teenagers need more sleep and much older adults need less sleep.

Seeing your GP

Sometimes there's a physical or medical cause for poor sleep.

This could be pain, an illness, or other physical problems that could disturb sleep.

There are also certain types of medication that can affect your sleep.

If you find that you have poor quality sleep with any of the above, visit your GP or medical professional to discuss your options.

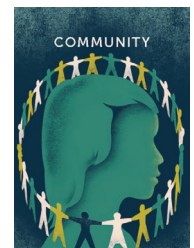
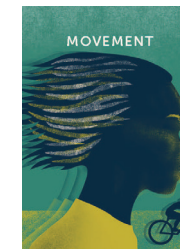
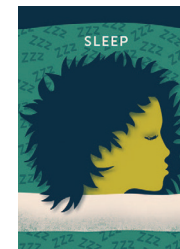
Are your needs being met?

Sleep is one of our 12 emotional and physical needs that we all need to meet in a rough balance to stay well.

Sometimes, when one or more of our needs are not being met, sleep can then be affected.

To find out more about our Emotional Needs & Resources approach, you can sign up to become a Friend of Suffolk Mind for free, and receive a complementary space on our award-winning course, The Mental Health Toolkit: The Essentials training.

Visit suffolkmind.org.uk/friend to sign up.



Tips and ideas

Create a routine that you want to stick to

Having a routine before you go to bed can help regulate your body into a sleeping pattern that makes you feel refreshed when you wake up.

Our tips:

- Try to stick to regular going to bed and getting up times
- Avoid screens two hours before you go to bed
- Exercise earlier in the day to burn cortisol and tire your body
- Have a warm shower a couple of hours before bed. When the body cools we begin to feel sleepy

Practise relaxation exercises

Learning ways to relax can help you prepare for sleep.

Our tip:

- Learn 7/11 breathing. Place your hand on your stomach and breathe in, filling your stomach with air for seven seconds. Hold it. Breathe out for 11 seconds. As long as the out-breath is longer than the in-breath, you can use any numbers you like

Make sure where you sleep is set up right

Ensure your bedroom is your 'temple' for sleep.

Our tips:

- Remove screens and other distractions, choose an alarm clock instead of your phone
- Keep the temperature cool
- Use blackout curtains, but an eye mask or adding a sheet over your blinds or curtains are cheaper alternatives

Keep a sleep diary

This two-week sleep diary could help you figure out what's affecting your sleep. . By finding patterns or reasons your sleep is good or poor, you can make small changes to your daily routine to improve your sleep.

You might want to include information such as:

- What time you go to bed and what time you get up
- How many hours of sleep you get
- Your overall quality of sleep
- How many times you wake up in the night and what you did while you were awake
- Whether you had nightmares, night terrors, sleep paralysis or sleepwalked during the night
- Whether you sleep during the day and for how long
- Any medication you're taking
- The amount of caffeine, alcohol or nicotine you have consumed
- The amount of physical activity you do
- What you eat and drink
- Your general wellbeing and mood

If you're a shift worker for example, keeping a diary can help you spot common themes even when your routine changes.

Find out more about sleep on our website

suffolkmind.org.uk/sleep



Week 1	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I went to bed at...							
I woke up at...							
Notes:							

Week 1	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I went to bed at...							
I woke up at...							
Notes:							

**We want to make Suffolk the best
place in the world for talking about
and taking care of mental health.**



0300 111 6000



info@suffolkmind.org.uk



suffolkmind.org.uk



@SuffolkMind

© Suffolk Mind, 2023

Not to be reproduced without written permission from Suffolk Mind.
Suffolk Mind Registered Charity No. 1003061