

Sleep Hygiene 101: Getting the Zzzzs You Need



Research shows that not getting enough sleep can affect your ability to retain information and focus on tasks. Also, sleep deprivation can weaken your immune system, which makes you more susceptible to catching a cold or flu. The bottom line: getting enough sleep should be an important part of your college success plan—especially when things get hectic.

1. **Make sleep a priority.** All around you, people are pulling all-nighters like it's a college rite of passage, but try to train yourself to get work done at a decent hour so you can rest. Your GPA will thank you.
2. **Invest in earplugs and a sleep mask.** Those around you may not be so considerate when you want to sleep. Keep earplugs and a sleep mask close by for when you need to block noise or light.
3. **Do your best to stick to a consistent bedtime and wake time.** It's tempting to sleep later when you're able, but going to sleep and getting up around the same time is better for your body's sleep patterns.
4. **Cut the caffeine.** Many of us rely on caffeine to wake up and get through the day, but if you're finding it hard to sleep at night, one culprit may be your daily lattes, coffee, or energy drinks. Try to not drink caffeinated beverages in the afternoons or evenings.
5. **Exercise earlier in the day.** Working out and getting your heart rate up and endorphins racing right before bed can make it hard to fall asleep.
6. **Avoid drinking alcohol before bed.** While it's true alcohol is a depressant and can help you relax, it impairs your ability to reach the restorative stage of sleep.
7. **Write it down.** If your to-do list is racing around your head, take a few minutes to make a list of what needs to be accomplished so that you can let go of your thoughts and focus on sleep.
8. **Have a relaxing pre-bed routine.** Doing the same things each night help to signal to your body that it's time to get ready for sleep.
9. **Avoid light from electronic devices before bed.** Devices emit blue light that stimulates our brains to be active—making it harder to sleep.
10. **Try meditation and deep breathing techniques to help you sleep.** It's no secret that being anxious and stressed can make it hard to sleep. Practices like mindfulness and meditation can help you release what's worrying you. Check out the relaxation exercises available on the McKinley Health Center website!

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