

# Sleep Hygiene.

Let's talk about it.



## What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is exactly as it sounds. It's all about making sure you're following good sleeping habits. It's no different to your personal hygiene, or even your diet. How well we sleep can have profound effects on our mental health and wellbeing, and vice versa - how we are feeling physically and emotionally plays a big role in how well we sleep. That's why sleep hygiene is so important.

A healthy mind and body needs (some would say craves) a good night's sleep. What happens when your head hits the pillow can impact how well you live your life. We all know what a bad night's sleep feels like. We're tired, demotivated, irritable, and lose focus easily. And if you suffer from any mental health issue or concern, bad sleep can make an already difficult situation or period in your life worse.

## Bad sleep causes.

- **Anxiety:** feeling anxious and worried can make your mind race and make it more difficult to get to sleep
- **Depression:** if you're depressed, you may find it difficult to fall asleep and to stay asleep, especially if you've slept too much throughout the day
- **Eating and drinking late:** eating or drinking too close to bedtime can make it harder to fall asleep
- **Jet lag:** if you've recently returned from abroad, the change in time zones can throw your body clock off and see you feeling tired or awake at odd times of the day or night
- **Relationship issues:** the same way anxiety can stop you falling asleep, relationship issues can play on your mind and make it more difficult to get to sleep
- **Shift work:** workers who have their shift patterns change may find it difficult to find a regular sleeping pattern
- **Stress:** stress can impact the quality and duration of your sleep and not getting enough sleep may also lead to stress
- **Insomnia:** this sleep disorder can make it difficult for you to fall asleep, or stay asleep, once you dose off



## Good sleep hygiene.

### Watch your body clock

- Make sure you get up when you wake up – preferably at the same time, even on weekends
- When you're tired, go to bed or start preparing for sleep, don't ignore it
- Avoid afternoon naps

### Follow a routine:

- Spend 30 minutes properly winding down from your day
- If you're a worrier, try adding an extra half an hour of 'worry time'
- Get rid of any distractions like televisions, mobile phones and laptops
- Try relaxation exercises like yoga or meditation to see if they work for you

### Healthy habits:

- Cut down on alcohol and smoking
- Be active and exercise regularly
- Enjoy fresh air – a gentle walk, sitting in a local park or staring at the horizon from the beach
- Don't eat near bedtime

### In The Bedroom:

- Make sure you have a comfortable pillow, sheets and mattress
- Set a comfortable temperature – if you can't, invest in your bedding
- Block out light and try make your bedroom as dark as possible – try an eye mask if you need
- Use earplugs if you can't drown out noise

## Bad sleep hygiene.



**Cigarettes:** nicotine can stimulate your brain, making your heart beat faster and increasing your blood pressure



**Alcohol:** alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it can also disturb your sleep pattern and leave you feeling tired after you've woken up



**Caffeine:** coffee and other drinks with high sugar content or caffeine can give you a burst of energy, making you feel alert and increasing your heart rate



**Sleeping pills:** medication may not always deal with the problem at the heart of your poor sleeping patterns and it may also make sleeping harder when you stop using it

## Where to from here?

We all visit our dentist when we have a toothache. The same goes for our physical health and why we schedule appointments with our GP, gynaecologist, physio, chiro, dermatologist, naturopath... the list is endless.

So why treat our mental health and wellbeing any differently?

If you've been stressed or worried for a long time, or longer than normal, then let's talk about it.

**Access Psych is here to support you.**

Call us on **1800 644 327**

Email **info@accesspsych.com.au**

Website **accesspsych.com.au**

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## Resources.

### HEAD TO HEALTH

#### Head to Health

Head to Health is a resource produced by the Australian Government Department of Health that brings together apps, online programs, online forums and phone services, along with a range of digital information resources. Head to Health has a fantastic page dedicated to sleep, with links to handy sleep apps and tonnes of useful information. For more, visit: [headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)



#### Sleep Health Foundation

Sleep Health Foundation is a not-for-profit health promotion charity that aims to raise community awareness about the importance of sleep and common sleep disorders. The site is filled with fact sheets, key events and other handy resources. For more, visit: [sleephealthfoundation.org.au](http://sleephealthfoundation.org.au)

## For urgent support.

**If there's an immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please call 000. If you need someone to talk with now, call:**

**Lifeline:** 13 11 14

**Beyond Blue:** 1300 22 4636 or chat online at [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

**Suicide Call Back Service:**  
1300 659 467

