

Stress can have a direct impact on the quality and length of a night's sleep. A poor night of sleep can result in a restless morning and reduced productivity during the day. During a period of high stress like the one we're all in right now, it's essential that we maintain proper sleep habits to help improve the quality of our sleep. This will help ensure we reap all of the benefits of a good night's rest, including appetite control and improved immunity, mood and overall mental health. Try these tips out tonight.



TIP #1- Set a morning alarm. Everyone has a circadian rhythm that is approximately 24 hours in length. Waking up at the same time every day reinforces our own personal rhythm, which allows us to function at our best. While you may have a more flexible schedule right now, it's important to continue to wake up at a consistent time in the morning.

Bonus tip: Be sure to get some exposure to sunlight as soon as possible after waking. This will help your internal signals know that your day has started (particularly if you use blackout shades).



Tip #2: Reduce blue light exposure! Blue light has been shown to be disruptive to our sleep cycle. Exposure to it suppresses the release of melatonin, which helps signal the body to prepare itself for sleep. If you find yourself working at a computer for long periods of time, try wearing blue-light-reducing glasses or using night mode. Also be sure to take regular breaks to stand up and move.

Bonus tip: Try one of the many meditation apps after you turn off your computer. It can help quiet your mind and get you ready for sleep.



Tip #3: Hydrate!.Fun fact: 60% of the human body is made up of water. We know that hydration is essential to muscle recovery after exercise, but it also plays an important role in sleep quality by affecting our hormone levels. Be sure to hydrate throughout the day, using a general guideline of drinking as much as half your body weight in ounces, to prevent trying to squeeze in your intake at night

Bonus tip: A key indicator is a urine color of straw yellow or lighter



TIP #4- Exercise! Research has shown that just 30 minutes of moderate exercise can increase the amount of time spent in deep sleep. Deep sleep is the time during which essential hormones are released leading to muscle growth and repair. While you are at it - grab that foam roller for a feel-good muscle massage.

Bonus tip: Avoid high intensity exercise close to bedtime; it may interfere with a smooth transition to deep sleep. Questions around exercise, please reach out to us via email: sportsperformance@hss.edu.



TIP #5- Set a night alarm. In addition to the morning alarm mentioned above, try using a nighttime alarm to signal when it's time to wrap up for the night and begin your nighttime routine. You can set the reminder anywhere from 15 minutes to 60 minutes prior to your bedtime. By this time, your electronics should be away and light exposure reduced to help your body know it's time for sleep.

Bonus tip: On an iPhone – you can set this under the clock feature > Bedtime > Bedtime Reminder.



TIP #6- Design your bedroom for success. Follow a few simple guidelines to help ensure that your bedroom is a sanctuary for quality sleep. First, keep the temperature between 60 and 68 degrees. Second, remove all electronics to minimize distractions and blue light. Third, get some bedding that you love and look forward to climbing into. It makes a difference!

Pamela Geisel is an exercise physiologist and is the manager of Performance Services at the Hospital for Special Surgery. She graduated with honors from Towson University with a bachelor's in exercise science and received her master's in exercise physiology from Adelphi University.

She is an active member of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and a NSCA certified strength and conditioning specialist. Pam has been in the fitness field since 2007 and has gained knowledge and experience in a variety of settings including corporate wellness, commercial fitness, personal training, and physical therapy clinics.

She shares her expertise as a contributing author and presenter for nationally recognized organizations and publications.

Brought to you by **HSS**. For any questions or if you are interested in additional resources for your employees, please contact EmployerConnect@hss.edu.