

# Sleep Well

Good sleep is key to having a good day at CUK...

...and is just as important as regular exercise and a healthy diet.

## Benefits of good sleep

GOOD SLEEP =  
**7-9**  
HOURS EVERY DAY

- ✓ **Improve your brain function:** good sleep can maximise problem-solving skills and enhance memory while poor sleep has been shown to impair brain function and decision-making skills.
- ✓ **Stay physically fit and well:** getting enough sleep has been shown to improve many aspects of athletic and physical performance. In contrast, not enough sleep has been linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's and depression.
- ✓ **Maintain your weight:** lack of sleep can increase your appetite and cravings for foods high in sugar and fat.
- ✓ **Boost your immune system:** at least seven hours of sleep can improve your immune function and help fight the common cold.
- ✓ **Better manage emotions:** good sleep supports good social skills and the ability to process emotions.

## Top tips to get good sleep

- 1 Eat well:** don't go to bed too hungry or too full. Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol too (alcohol might make you feel sleepy, but it disrupts sleep later on).
- 2 Exercise:** Regular physical activity can promote better sleep but avoid being active too close to bedtime. Make sure you also get fresh air every day.
- 3 Write your worries down:** Getting your worries out of your head is proven to help reduce anxiety and stress and improve sleep. Do it every day in a journal or the notes app of your phone.
- 4 Follow a sleep schedule:** aim for the same amount of sleep every day to reinforce your body's sleep-wake cycle. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, read or listen to soothing music and try again once you're tired. Repeat as needed.
- 5 Get comfy:** Switch off lights or wear a sleep mask to block out light sources. Make sure your bedding is warm/cool enough, and if it's noisy, try a white noise app to block out sounds.



## Time to learn more about sleep?

Click on the links below.

- 4 min read** Find out more about your [sleep cycle](#)
- 5 min read** Are you sleep deprived? Take [this self-assessment](#)
- 7 min read** [10 things](#) you may not know about sleep
- 7 min read** Take [this quiz](#) to learn more about the importance of good sleep
- 15 min read** [Why we sleep](#); the new science of sleep and dreams
- 120 min listen** Sleep and health; [daily steps](#) to sleep better and reduce inflammation



## Keep a sleep diary

Make a note of when you slept well or poorly, and it'll help you identify possible reasons why that happened. Complete for at least a week.

- How did you sleep?
- What time did you go to bed?
- How long did it take you to fall asleep?
- How many times did you wake up?
- How long did you sleep for in total?
- What did you eat /drink within four hours of bed and at what time (EG Coffee and chocolate bar 30 min before bed).
- What was the temperature in your room?
- What light sources were there?
- How much noise was there?
- What activities did you do before bed? (EG Gym one hour before bed)
- Any other comments?
- How did you feel the next day (1 = awful, 5 = average, 10 = great) Include notes too (EG drowsy, grumpy, anxious).

## Try this to fall asleep in two minutes

Practice every day for six weeks

- 1** Relax your entire face, including the muscles inside your mouth, and focus on your breathing
- 2** Drop your shoulders to release the tension and let your hands drop to the side of your body
- 3** Exhale, relaxing your chest
- 4** Relax your stomach, thighs, knees, legs and feet
- 5** Clear your mind for 10 seconds by imagining a relaxing scene
- 6** If this doesn't work, try saying the words "don't think" over and over for 10 seconds

## Need extra support?

We all have the occasional sleepless night, but if these happen regularly, there's sources of support available.

### Fleet:

Visit the Medical Centre or contact your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

### Shore:

Speak to your GP, Occupational Health or your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)



Our **Mental Health First Aiders and Champions** can provide support and signpost you to additional help if and when you need it.

