

WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

If your inability to fall asleep or stay asleep persists despite your efforts you may need some professional help to figure out what is interfering with your sleep and how to stop this from happening. CAPS is one resource which can provide such assistance.

RESOURCES

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS offers a wide range of free and confidential services to Penn students, including individual, couples, group counseling/therapy. Any of these services can be used to identify your unique stressors and explore sleep strategies that will work for you. In addition, workshops on stress management may be helpful. These workshops are available upon request or when considered appropriate by CAPS' staff. Appointments can be made by phone at (215) 898-7021 or in person. A counselor is available weekdays and weekends for emergency consultations. CAPS is open Monday-Friday from 9 am – 5 pm.

Student Health Service

Penn Tower, 34th & Civic Center Blvd.
(215) 662-2850

Office of Health Education, Student Health

Penn Tower, 34th & Civic Center Blvd.
3609-3611 Locust Walk
(215) 573-3525

**If necessary, contact a sleep disorder center.
Here are a few that are close to Penn:**

Center for Sleep Medicine
Lafayette Hill, PA
(610) 828-4060

Sleep Disorders Center at TJU
1015 Walnut St.
(215) 955-9783

Pennsylvania Hospital Sleep Disorder Center
8th and Spruce
(215) 829-7079

Penn Center for Sleep Disorders
HUP
(215) 662-7772

**For a complete list of sleep disorder centers,
go to:**

http://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep_centers/index.php

Counseling and Psychological Services

University of Pennsylvania
133 S. 36th Street (corner of 36th and Walnut)
Philadelphia, PA 19104/3246
(215) 898-7021

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>

THE SLEEP PERFORMANCE

CONNECTION



CAPS

Counseling and Psychological
Services
University of Pennsylvania
(215) 898-7021

WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

Sleep is a key component of your academic success. Sleep affects your health, brain emotional functioning, and safety. Insufficient sleep can contribute to increased stress, difficulty concentrating, trouble accomplishing daily life tasks, and poorly handling of minor irritations. Additionally, sleep loss can impair memory, learning and logical reasoning, contribute to mistakes or poor productivity at school or work, and lead to irritability and tense interpersonal relationships. In regard to your safety, serious or fatal accidents may occur when your sleep has been compromised. The good news is that there are many techniques you can use to help improve your sleep, which will help you optimize your academic abilities.

SLEEP PROBLEMS

Sleep needs differ per individual. However, on average, a healthy adult needs approximately 8 hours of sleep per night. There are many reasons for poor sleep, such as an inadequate sleep environment like mattress comfort and room temperature, sleep apnea, medical problems, and psychological problems which include depression and anxiety. Shifts in circadian rhythms also affect sleep.

Most college students have an erratic schedule and may find it difficult to consistently get 8 hours of sleep every night. Many go to sleep late and then wake up late which disrupts their normal sleep cycle. Students also report using weekends to “make up” for sleep lost during the week. These disruptions can impair their academic performance.

So are sleep issues a concern for you? There are many ways poor sleep makes us feel less efficient and the following are some questions you should ask yourself to determine if inadequate sleep is one area in your life that needs to be more closely considered:

Do you feel sleepy throughout the day?

Do you take naps consistently in the week?

Do you repeatedly have difficulties waking up?

Do you have ongoing difficulties staying awake during lectures?

Do you typically feel tired and lethargic?

CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL AND SLEEP

Caffeine, stress, alcohol, and drugs commonly interfere with one’s ability to fall asleep or stay asleep. Caffeine is a stimulant, but the energy that we get from it takes from our alertness later. For many people, its side effects outweigh its benefits. Caffeine can make you jittery and disturb your ability to fall asleep, even after several hours from consumption. Alcohol also negatively affects the quality of our sleep. Alcohol interrupts the deepest cycles of sleep, which is when our bodies are repairing themselves. While alcohol may help people fall asleep, it wakes people up during their most critical sleep time, thus not allowing their bodies to rest properly and inhibiting their cognitive and physical performance.

TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP

DO.....

Have a fixed time for waking up. Try to get up every day within an hour of this time.

Remove clocks from your bedroom, or if you use your clock as your alarm, turn your clock away from the bed. This will prevent you from constantly checking the time and worrying about their sleeplessness.

If you wake up in the night, relax in bed for a while and let sleep return. If this doesn’t work, then get out of bed and do some quiet activity. Don’t return to bed until you feel ready to fall asleep. Repeat this as often as necessary.

Reserve your bed for sleeping and sex and no other activities.

Make sure your room is dark, comfortable, quiet, and cool.

Exercise regularly and complete your workout at least a few hours before bedtime.

Try muscle relaxation and deep breathing techniques.

Limit your consumption of caffeine (soda, tea, coffee, chocolate, some prescription medications, etc.), alcohol, heavy and spicy foods, and smoking as these can all interfere with your sleep quality.

DON’T.....

Stay in bed if you can’t fall asleep. If after 30 minutes you are still unable to fall asleep, then get out of bed and do something relaxing. Don’t return to bed until you feel ready to fall asleep.

Go to sleep unless you are tired. Delay your bedtime until you are ready to fall asleep.

Read, watch TV, study, use your computer, or eat in bed.

Take naps in the late afternoon or evening.

Nap for more than 20-30 minutes at any time during the day.

Exercise close to bedtime.

Drink caffeinated beverages after dinner.

Don’t eat a large meal right before bedtime.