

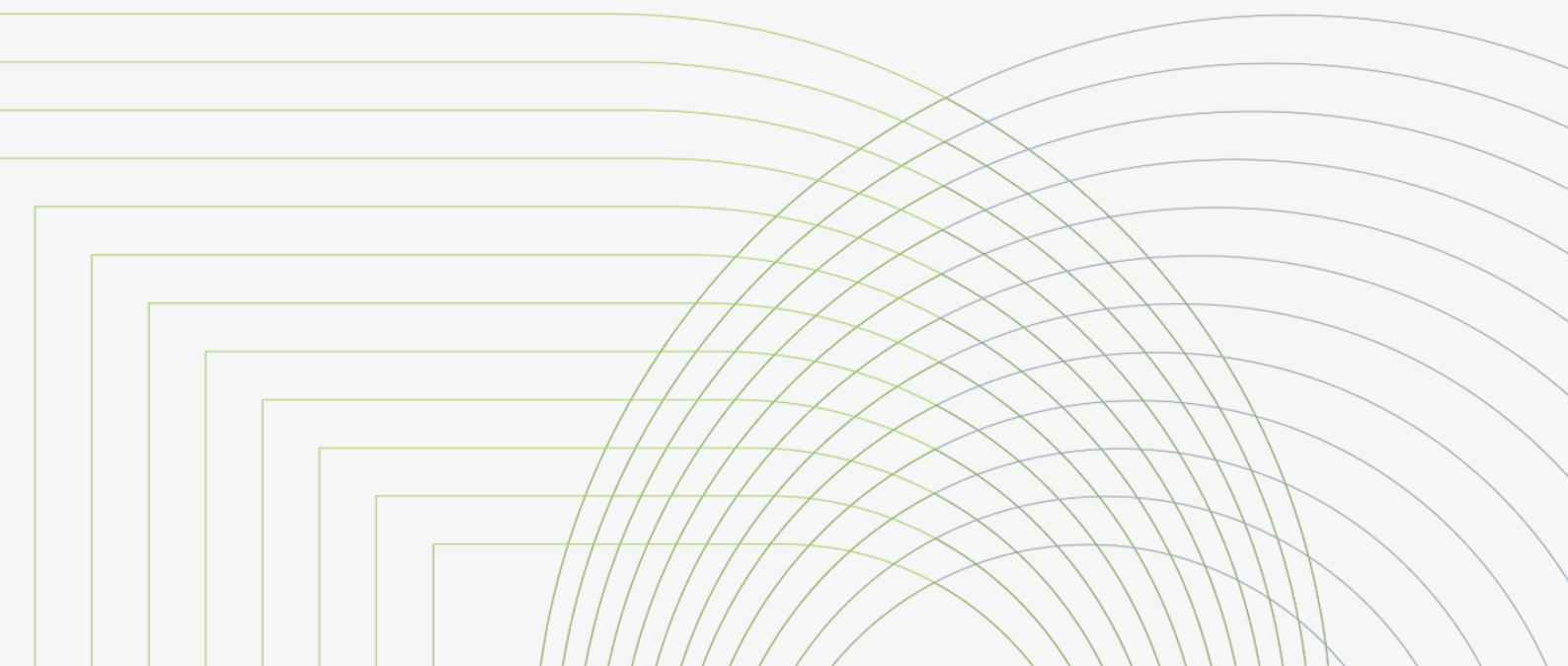
# Module 5.1

# General Health:

# Sleep

Keeping the Body in Mind – Resources

Consumer Learning Module



# Module 5.1: Sleep

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## Sleep

Getting enough sleep is crucial for our well-being. Most people need 7-8 hours of sleep per night to feel rested and alert during the day. With enough sleep, you'll have more energy, feel motivated, and be ready to tackle your daily activities.



## Good Sleep

Good sleep is essential for our physical and mental health. Here are some benefits of regular, restful sleep:

- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Lowers the risk of diabetes and heart problems
- Boosts your immune system
- Improves concentration, memory, and problem-solving
- Makes it easier to manage stress

If you don't get enough sleep or have an irregular sleep pattern, you may experience physical and mental health issues. Changes in your sleep habits can also be an early sign of illness. If you're sleeping more or less than usual, having trouble falling asleep, or sleeping at odd times, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor or mental health professional.

## How Much Sleep Do You Need?

**Seven to eight hours of sleep:** Is considered best amount of sleep to aim for every night. It should lead you to wake feeling rested and ready for the day ahead and help offer some protection against diseases.

**Six hours or less of sleep:** Can cause a drop in sensitivity to insulin, which may increase your risk of developing weight gain, obesity, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes - all conditions which can cause complications that could compromise your health now and in the future. But that doesn't mean that getting excess sleep is healthier either.

**Nine hours or more of sleep:** Is also not good for your health. People who sleep this long or longer, have a shorter life-span, studies show, though it's not yet clear why.

## Sleep Hygiene

Are you tired of being tired? Good sleep hygiene might help. Daily habits and activities can help or hinder your ability to fall asleep, stay asleep and enjoy good quality sleep. So, build these sleep-friendly steps into your daily routine:

1. **Rise and retire at the same time:** This helps to synchronise your body clock (and hormone production) with light and dark, so that you get tired in the evening and more wakeful in the morning. Opening your curtains first thing on waking and eating breakfast 'al fresco' (e.g. outdoors on your veranda) can also help.



2. **Lose the overhead lights at night:** Where possible, use lamps with globes that have a low wattage. Switching on bright lights at night suppresses levels of the 'sleep hormone', melatonin, which drops your body temperature and helps you fall asleep.

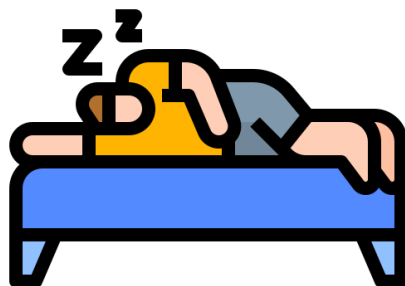


**3. Set a screen curfew:** Aim to stay off screens the closer it gets to bedtime. Like overhead lights, the light from computers, laptops, mobile phones and tablet devices also lowers your body's production of melatonin, which may then delay your sleep onset.

Over the course of the week, this constant light exposure, particularly after dark, can shift your body clock. Then hormones that make you wakeful or sleepy are less in synch with night and day. Digital screens, fluorescent and LED lights all add to this problem because they give off blue light.

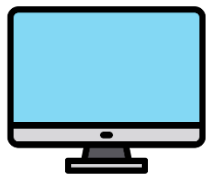


**4. Avoid long daytime naps:** These can put your body clock out of synch with light and dark, so you feel tired in the morning and wakeful at night. In some people, naps in front of the television at night can reduce 'sleep pressure', which simply means you feel less tired at bedtime, because you had some sleep in the last few hours.



## Unwinding for Sleep

Avoiding stimulating activities in the evening can help you fall asleep faster and have better quality of sleep. So, aim to avoid or minimise the following, which could wake you up when you want to be winding down:



### **Looking at computers and mobile phones**

The bright light from screens sends messages to your brain to wake up. Reduce screen time in the evening, especially for at least one or two hours before bed.



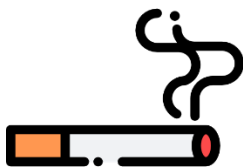
### **Body Clock**

Keep to regular sleep and wake times and avoid sleep-ins. This will help keep your body clock in time with night and day and light and dark, which will benefit your sleep.



### **Caffeine**

Caffeine is a stimulant. If you have trouble sleeping, reduce your caffeine intake or have no caffeine at all.



### **Nicotine**

Tobacco is a stimulant and can make it harder to fall asleep and lead to more vivid dreams that may wake you overnight.



### Alcohol

A few wines or beers may help you relax and feel drowsy, but they can disrupt your sleep later so that you wake up feeling unrested and tired the next day.



### Loud Music and TV

Some music and TV shows can be stimulating, so as you get closer to bed, choose a more laid-back play list and avoid shows like thrillers, which may hype you up.



### Exercise

High energy exercise after about 6 pm can make some people feel more alert all evening and interfere with their sleep onset.



### Food

Avoid a large meal or snack before bed as this may kickstart your metabolism into action, which can interfere with your sleep.



### Medication

Some medications can make you sleepy, while others make you feel more alert or awake. Ask your GP or healthcare professional about the best time to take your medication to maximise your sleep.



## Sleep Habits



**Activity: Assess your sleep habits**

**Do you get enough sleep? Do you have a regular sleep pattern? If not, why do you think that is?**

I wake up at: \_\_\_\_\_

I go to bed at: \_\_\_\_\_



When you don't get enough sleep or go to bed late, you might experience daytime sleepiness, irritability, memory and attention problems, mood changes, cravings for unhealthy foods, weight gain, and difficulty learning new information.



**Activity: Reflect on your sleep deprivation symptoms**

**What symptoms do you experience when you don't get enough sleep?**



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Good sleep hygiene (healthy sleep habits) is essential for a restful night's sleep. Several factors can affect your sleep, such as inconsistent sleep and wake times, lack of daily routine, and exercising too late in the day.



**Activity: Identify factors affecting your sleep**

**What are some factors that influence your sleep?**

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**Here are some tips to improve your sleep:**

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule, even on weekends
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine (e.g. meditate or read a book before bed)
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime
- Limit screen time before bed
- Exercise earlier in the day



**Activity: Plan to improve your sleep**

**What are some things you could do to improve your sleep pattern?**

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**Activity: Sleep diary and goals**

Complete the sleep diary on the next page for the next week and set goals to improve your sleep.





**Activity: My goals for this week to improve my sleep are:**

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3

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4

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5

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6

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## John's Journey to Better Sleep



John, a 35-year-old, had been struggling with poor sleep for several months. He often went to bed late after working on his computer, had trouble falling asleep, and woke up feeling tired and irritable. His sleep problems began to affect his work, relationships, and overall wellbeing.

John decided it was time to make a change. He started by assessing his sleep habits, identifying factors that affected his sleep, and setting goals to improve his sleep pattern.

One of the main factors affecting John's sleep was his irregular sleep schedule. He often worked late into the night and slept in on weekends, which disrupted his body's natural sleep rhythm. He also found that using electronic devices before bedtime made it harder for him to fall asleep due to the blue light emitted by the screens.

To improve his sleep, John set the following goals:

1. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule by going to bed at 10:30 pm and waking up at 6:30 am every day, including weekends.
2. Create a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading a book or taking a warm bath, to help signal to his body that it was time to sleep.
3. Limit screen time before bed by stopping the use of electronic devices at least one hour before bedtime.

John also decided to keep a sleep diary to track his progress and monitor his sleep habits. After implementing these changes, John began to notice improvements in his sleep quality. He fell asleep more quickly, slept more soundly, and woke up feeling refreshed and energized.

John's journey to better sleep improved not only his sleep habits but also his overall quality of life. He felt more focused and productive at work, his relationships improved, and he was better able to manage stress. By identifying factors that affected his sleep and taking steps to address them, John was able to achieve better sleep and enhance his wellbeing.

**Congratulations! You've now completed module 5.1 General Health - Sleep**



Scan the QR code or visit the link for online access to all of the modules and a complete list of references or visit the link below:  
[mindgardens.org.au/KBIMResources](https://mindgardens.org.au/KBIMResources)



Developed by the Mindgardens Neuroscience Network and the Keeping the Body in Mind Team 2023.

Funded by the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales