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Take Away Messages

Sleep Secrets

Sleep Science

- "Normal" sleep is not solid.
- Sleep timing is determined by two complementary processes: sleep pressure, and our circadian rhythm (aka "body clock").
- Tiredness and sleepiness are not the same thing.
- The amount of sleep we need changes across the lifespan. Adults usually need between 7-9 hours of sleep per night (but some people may be able to cope with 6 hours and others may need 10 hours).
- The best indicator of how much sleep you need is how you are feeling and functioning during the day.

Do I have a sleep problem?

- There are many reasons why we might feel tired, and not all of them are related to sleep.
- First, consider whether you are allowing yourself sufficient opportunity for sleep.
- Insomnia Disorder is characterised by difficulty falling asleep or difficulty staying asleep despite adequate opportunity and circumstances for sleep, as well as significant daytime consequences (e.g., feeling tired, low energy, moody/ irritable, impairments in concentration, productivity, or memory).
- Pseudo-Insomnia occurs when we believe that we are not getting enough sleep, when there is no objective evidence for this.
- Laying in bed thinking and worrying about sleep causes more daytime fatigue than laying in bed awake but relaxed.

Mind Your Melon
2026

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The Sleep Secrets: How to Sleep Better

1. Learn about "normal" sleep

2. Follow sleep hygiene recommendations:
   - Keep a consistent bedtime and wake-up time
   - Go to bed when sleepy (not just tired)
   - Get exposure to morning bright light
   - Make your bedroom environment comfortable (cool, dark, quiet)
   - Keep the bedroom only for sleep
   - Consider pre-bedtime tech use
   - Avoid excessive consumption of caffeine and alcohol
   - Avoid long daytime naps

3. Use helpful thinking to challenge unhelpful thoughts about sleep or try mindfulness meditation to help calm a racing mind

4. Use bedtime restriction to re-train unhelpful sleep associations
   - Keep a sleep diary for 1-2 weeks to establish a baseline
   - Calculate your total sleep time (TST) and time in bed (TIB) from the sleep diary
   - Plan to reduce TIB to more closely match TST (min 6hrs)
   - Keep a consistent bedtime and wake-up time (even on weekends)

5. Whatever you try, implement it consistently for at least 1-2 weeks before deciding whether it is helpful. Sleep diaries are an excellent tool to monitor progress.

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