

Trouble sleeping?

For many students, college life and sleep deprivation are practically synonymous. College students juggle academic demands, extracurricular activities, family life, and active social lives. They have so many competing demands that it can seem impossible to both sleep and do it all!

As hard as you may try to fight your need for sleep, it's a losing battle. The vast majority of college students experience some kind of sleep deprivation, and slowly, consequences emerge. For example, cognitive performance is directly affected by insufficient sleep, and grades may suffer. Irritability, depression, memory problems, and increased likelihood of accident and injury are all linked to lack of sleep. Sleep deprivation generally makes people feel worse physically, perform beneath potential, and behave in a way that does not best express who they are.

Here are some highly "do-able" strategies to improve your sleep quality. Visit the National Sleep Foundation site for even more information.

www.sleepfoundation.org

1. Develop a predictable sleep pattern by maintaining consistent bedtime and wake-up times. Soon, you may start waking up without needing an alarm clock! Eight to nine hours of sleep per night is an ideal schedule.
2. Prepare your mind and body for sleep by establishing an evening relaxation routine, including reading, meditation, or other activities that make you feel peaceful.
3. Use your bed only for sleep, not for other activities like studying and especially not for worrying! If you develop a strong association between being in your bed and falling asleep, it will be easier to do so.
4. Stop all energizing activities well in advance of bedtime. It's best to stop studying an hour before bed, and to stop exercising, eating large meals, and drinking alcohol three hours before bed.
5. Limit your caffeine intake, especially in the late afternoon/evening.
6. Blue light, such as the light from television and computer screens, is known to impair the body's ability to fall asleep. Shut down Facebook and turn off the computer and TV well in advance of bedtime.
7. Consult the counseling center or your physician if you experience insomnia or other symptoms of sleep disturbance, including fatigue, excessive sleepwalking, interrupted breathing during sleep, restless leg syndrome, sleep-eating, and the tendency to doze off during the daytime.

Sleep well!