




Teenagers Who Are Tired – Sleep Hygiene

Getting enough sleep can be really hard for a teenager. There is so much to fit in—school, homework, activities, socializing, athletics—and the school day just starts so early! And then, even when you manage to get to bed at a decent time, you still may toss and turn and find it hard to get to sleep! We hear this story a lot.

Here is some advice to help you get a good night's sleep. This is such a common problem that we even have a new term to describe what we do around the sleep issue—"Sleep Hygiene."

HERE IS THE ESSENCE OF GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE:



YOUR SLEEP OBJECTIVE should be 8 or 9, or even 10 hours of sleep every night. Your health, your happiness, your weight control, and your life depend on it! If you get less you can't really make it up by sleeping late on the weekend—your body doesn't work that way.

Make your **BEDROOM COMFORTABLE**. It needs to be cool, dark, and quiet. A fan or ear plugs can help with noise, and a sleep mask with light.

ELIMINATE CAFFEINE entirely (coffee, sodas, and especially "energy" drinks), or at least drink it before the afternoon.

GOOD EXERCISE LEADS TO GOOD SLEEPING. Exercise every day if possible, and leave yourself at least 2-3 hours afterwards to wind down.

WORRY TIME needs to stop well before bedtime. If you have to worry, set a time for it and then stop. (Easy to say, harder to do—but it's possible!)

HABITS are important, so try to have a regular routine for most of your activities—study, exercise, TV, texting, etc. Going to bed at the same time every night will condition you for sleep. Keeping the same bedtime even on weekends can be helpful, too, since getting up at noon on Sunday makes it hard to sleep at the regular time, and your whole pattern can be broken.

Use your **BED ONLY FOR SLEEP**—not studying, not texting, etc. That way, your body will instinctively know that when you are in bed, it's time for sleep and nothing else.

GLIDE INTO SLEEP. Don't crash land into sleep—studying, texting, gaming, watching TV, and then trying to go to sleep all of a sudden. That usually doesn't work. It's better to stop those stimulating activities about two hours before sleep time. (That's hard to do, but important.) Then start your glide to sleep ritual—maybe a bath or shower, getting everything quiet, reading in bed for 15-20 minutes before lights out, and at last getting into your favorite position and fading right on out.

If you can't get to sleep after about 20 minutes, don't just lie there, and don't keep looking at the clock. Get up out of bed and do something non-stimulating, such as reading (not TV!), and then go back to bed and see if your body will cooperate this time.

Your sleep ritual can take a week or two to start working, but be persistent, and it will work.

Even if all the above isn't working for you, it is best to avoid sleep-inducing medicines, many of which can be abused. A better idea is to come on in and visit us at Bayside so we can help to coach you into great habits that work.

We pledge not only to care for you, but to care about you.