

# SLEEP FACTS

*from A to Zzzzz...*

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# Understanding **THE STAGES OF SLEEP**





Why do some people sleep soundly while others wake up feeling more tired than when they closed their eyes? The key may be found in the science of sleep, consisting of complex, multi-stage sleep cycles. From non-REM sleep stages to what sleep cycle is the dream sleep stage, here is what happens when you sleep.



## The Stages of Sleep

Once you sink into your comfy bed, the average sleep session is broken into four stages of sleep, each sleep cycle lasting about 90-minutes-long and may vary from night to night. Here's what happens during each sleep cycle:

### 1st Stage of Sleep -

Your first sleep cycle is considered a non-REM period. During the first stage of sleep, you may drift in and out of slumber. It's easy to wake up at this point, and sometimes, you might feel your body jerk suddenly, also known as "sleep starts" indicating that the motor areas of your brain are still at work.

### 2nd Stage of Sleep -

You'll spend majority of your night in your second sleep cycle – also part of non-REM sleep. Studies have shown that during this second stage of sleep, you may experience small spells of brain activity known as sleep spindles. Sleep spindles refresh your ability to learn – a critical component in performance on learning tasks. Therefore, getting too little sleep in this sleep cycle may result in decreased ability to learn at an optimal pace.

### 3rd Stage of Sleep -

Your third sleep cycle marks the start of your deep sleep period. While awakenings are rare during stage three of sleep, this deep non-REM period is most often when sleepwalking, sleep talking, and night terrors occur.

### REM Sleep -

Best known as the dream sleep stage, REM sleep, also known as rapid eye movement, is a continuation of the deep sleep cycle and first occurs about 90 minutes after falling asleep. Although some dreaming can occur in non-REM sleep, most of your dreaming occurs here. Your brain waves are more active than in other sleep stages, breathing and heart rate becomes more rapid, and your muscles are temporarily paralyzed. Wake up feeling groggy and not refreshed? You may not be spending enough time in the REM sleep cycle. However, the older you are, the less time you spend in REM sleep.

During an average night, you cycle through all stages of sleep several times. Increasingly longer, deeper periods of the REM cycle occur as you approach the dawn of the day. While the time you spend in each stage of sleep may vary from person to person, both non-REM and REM sleep cycles are vital for memory consolidation, ability to learn, and stress levels. 🌊

# FOODS

## That Help You Sleep Better Naturally

You know that certain foods like caffeine and sugar can make getting enough shut-eye a pipe dream. But, did you know that what you eat and drink can help you drift off to dreamland faster? From certain fruits to your favorite protein, here are foods that help you sleep better naturally.



### Fruit

While it's best to avoid refined sugar before bedtime, naturally occurring sugar found in certain fruits, such as kiwi and tart cherries, are known to boost melatonin. Melatonin is a natural hormone that instructs your body when to wake up and when to fall asleep, making fruits that promote melatonin great natural sleep aids.



## Nuts and seeds

Nuts like walnuts, cashews, almonds, sunflowers and more are chock full of tryptophan, but also get converted into melatonin. A quarter-cup serving of these natural sources of amino acid can help regulate your sleep cycle.





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## Herbal tea

Chamomile tea has long been established as the go-to tea when you need a little help in the shut-eye department, but really, any non-caffeinated herbal tea can be a calming ritual to mentally prepare you for bedtime.

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## Fatty fish

Thanks to vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids, fatty fish can help regulate serotonin. A key component for establishing a fixed sleeping and waking cycle, fish such as salmon also serve up potassium, zinc, folate and other nutrients that promote a good night's sleep.





## Warm milk

Heated milk is another old-school staple for satisfying sleep. Warm milk can help you feel drowsy and ward off any hunger pangs that might start creeping up before bedtime. Grab some almond or soy milk if you're sensitive to dairy.



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## Lean protein

Thanksgiving dinner is a great time to bond with the family and share a meal together, but we are all familiar with the sleepy effects a roast turkey dinner can have on us. Turns out that there is a science behind the drowsiness you experience after your Thanksgiving feast. The bird's tryptophan helps boost the brain chemical serotonin, which can help regulate sleep, mood, and digestion, among other things.

While a full stomach can hinder a restful night of slumber, small amounts of food and drink that contain amino acids, enzymes, nutrients can work with hormones to regulate your sleep cycle and promote a good night's sleep. Look for bedtime snack options that contain calcium, potassium, tryptophan, serotonin, vitamin D, and more and you may find that these foods that help you sleep better naturally can help get you closer to catching Z's. 🍃

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A blurred background image of a person sleeping in a bed with a pink pillow and white bedding.

# How Much **SLEEP DO YOU REALLY NEED?**

Eight hours of sleep is usually considered the ideal amount of rest, but it's not always attainable or even practical. While a good night's sleep is necessary for good health, the number of hours needed will depend on the individual.









## Is There Such a Thing as Too Much Sleep?

A restful night can help you feel refreshed in the morning, so it's natural to think that more sleep will help you feel even more awake and alert. Believe it or not, there is a downside to spending too much time in bed. Studies have shown that people experience brain fog and have difficulty concentrating when they oversleep.

If you like sleeping in on the weekend, rest assured you can still enjoy your extra slumber on occasion—just don't make it a habit of snoozing past your alarm clock the rest of the week. According to the Journal

of the American Geriatrics Society, getting too much shut-eye on a regular basis can age your brain at a faster rate.

Too much sleep could also be a symptom of health issues. For those people who find it hard to get out of bed in the morning, obesity, diabetes, depression, cardiovascular disease, and other health disorders could be the culprit. A study from the Chicago School of Medicine reported that individuals getting more than eight hours of sleep at night had a 10% higher risk for heart trouble; for angina, the risk is more than double.



## How Much Sleep Do I Need?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, the average adult needs seven to nine hours of sleep each night, though as few as five hours could also work for some individuals. The proper amount depends on your individual needs as well as both internal and external factors.

Here are three things to consider when determining how much sleep you need each night:

### AGE.

Sleep is relative to our growth. Babies sleep most of the day because they need the extra rest in order to grow. However, as we mature into adulthood, we need less sleep.

### HEALTH.

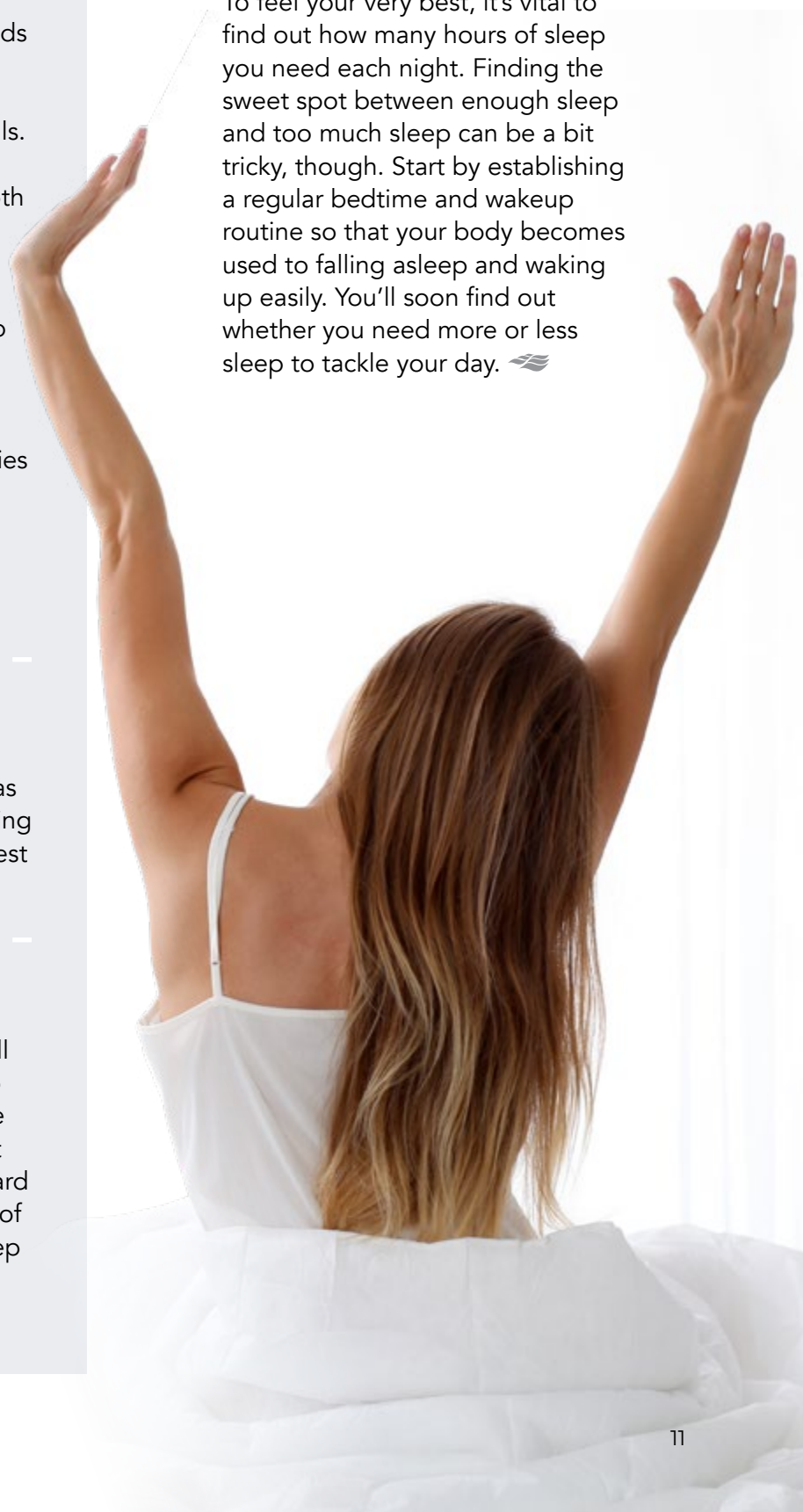
People in good health—both physical and mental—won't need as much sleep. But if you are not feeling well, it's natural you'll need more rest in order to feel better.

### LIFESTYLE.

If you have a hectic schedule, you'll need to feel well rested in order to keep up. A regular exercise routine can help out by giving you a boost of energy, but if you are training hard for a marathon, you'll need plenty of sleep to restore your body and keep your stamina.

## Finding Your Way to Sweet Dreams

To feel your very best, it's vital to find out how many hours of sleep you need each night. Finding the sweet spot between enough sleep and too much sleep can be a bit tricky, though. Start by establishing a regular bedtime and wakeup routine so that your body becomes used to falling asleep and waking up easily. You'll soon find out whether you need more or less sleep to tackle your day. 🌿



# HOW TO POWER-DOWN for a Good Night's Rest

A restful night's sleep is optimal for good health, but getting one can be easier said than done for many people. If you find yourself counting sheep at night, here are some tips that will help you fall asleep—and stay asleep—more quickly.







**GO TO BED AT THE SAME TIME EVERY NIGHT.** A regular bedtime isn't just for kids. When it comes to sleep, our bodies crave routine. By going to bed at a reasonable hour every night, your body will get used to falling asleep and waking up at the right times, leaving you feeling alert and refreshed in the morning.



**POWER DOWN EARLY.** The blue light emitted from the too-bright screens of our phones and tablets can keep you up and alert. Ideally, you'll want to keep portable electronic devices out of the bedroom completely, but if you use your phone as an alarm clock, adjust your settings to nighttime mode so that the light is dimmer during off hours.

**SHUT OFF THE TV.** It's fine to enjoy a few laughs from your favorite late-night shows before bed, but be sure to shut off the TV before you get some shut-eye. As with tablets and phones, the light can keep you alert and delay your much-needed REM sleep. If you fall asleep with it on, consider setting a sleep timer so the screen shuts off after a brief period.





**GET COZY.** Sleeping is difficult when it is too hot or too cold. Experts say that 67 degrees is the perfect temperature for sleeping, so be sure to adjust the heat or the air conditioning in your bedroom. Adjust your bedding according to the season so you don't feel too hot or too cold.

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**DECLUTTER YOUR BEDROOM.**

For a good night's sleep, a bedroom should be clutter-free, but this isn't always the case. If your bedroom does double duty as an office or a nursery, try to organize the space so that your bed remains clear and comfortable for sleeping. If you like to read before nodding off at night, keep one book on your nightstand, not a messy stack.



### LET IN SOME LAVENDER.

The scent of lavender is known to have healing and relaxing properties. Try a mist of this essential oil on your pillow before going to sleep at night and you'll feel well rested in the morning.



**TAKE A WARM BATH.** There are few things more relaxing than a soak before bed time. Whether you opt for a bubble bath indoors or sit in the spa outside for a bit, you'll go to bed feeling relaxed and wake up feeling great.



If you're having trouble getting to sleep at night, try some of these tips for sweeter dreams the next time your head hits the pillow. 🌊



## 7 SOUNDS THAT HELP YOU SLEEP

It's thought that steady background noise can help you fall asleep – and stay asleep. Over the course of a few nights, take these sounds for a test run to see which might work best for you using a free app or a sound spa device.

1. White noise, like the whirl of an oscillating fan or the hum of an air conditioner
2. Gentle beat of rain drops
3. Pitter patter of a shower
4. Music, like jazz, classical or piano
5. Ocean waves
6. Nature sounds such as sounds of birds chirping
7. A softly babbling stream 🌊

*#SundanceLife*



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