

Sleep



It is that time again to revisit the issue of sleep. It is not uncommon that when the stress level rises (finals, important exams, presentations), anxiety increases and sleep can be interrupted. We can find ourselves having difficulty

sleeping just at a time when we need sleep the most to keep our emotional and physical fuel tank from becoming depleted. The data on the role of adequate sleep on mental and physical health including memory consolidation is very strong.

Students talk about lying in bed ruminating about their studying and then tossing and turning. Sometimes the worries get bigger and go beyond a test score to concerns about careers. Some of you describe not being able to fall asleep, while others collapse out of sheer exhaustion to wake up at 3 am and the worries of the world begin flooding your thoughts. That old and unwelcome Imposter Syndrome can also sneak in during the middle of the night.

It is time to consider developing a sleep hygiene plan!!!! Please take a look at the suggestions below and some new resources to help you protect your sleep.

1. Start with getting your thoughts into a helpful place. Try not to panic about sleep as the anxiety about not sleeping interferes with sleep-

Try thoughts like:

"I am working on finding the best sleep plan, and I will not focus on not sleeping"

"I will experiment with different options and see which plan works best."

2. Follow a sleep schedule, with regular bedtime and arising time. Get up at the same hour even if you have not slept well, and avoid daytime naps.

3. Avoid stimulating activities like surfing the internet on your phone, iPad or computer, playing video games, and watching TV late at night. Turn off all devices at least 1-2 hours before sleep.

By Dr. Margaret Rea

4. Avoid alcohol and caffeine in the evening
5. Sleep in a room that is totally dark, quiet, and cool
6. Have a small snack before bedtime if needed, but avoid having a large meal within 2-3 hours of bedtime.
7. Remind yourself that even if you do not sleep well on a particular night, you will still be able to function the next day. Challenge stress inducing thoughts like "I must get 8 hours of sleep."
8. Before bed, write down or file away in a mental filing cabinet any 'to do' list, anxious, or repetitive thoughts. Know that you can return to them the next morning.
9. Do not look at the clock.
10. Do not exercise within 3 hours of bedtime.
11. Use a relaxation technique at bedtime.

The good news is that research supports that the use of short accessible relaxation techniques like mindful body scans can help with sleep (see the links below and the wellness tip). You don't need to spend an hour a day meditating, but can use short mindfulness meditation practices and get relief. Also, you don't need months of practice to get an effect on your sleep quality or duration.

<http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2110998>
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/joop.12115>

To learn a relaxation technique- check out the links and YouTube videos below that help with sleep. Also, please take a look at the Webinar on your Canvas Wellness site. In addition, Student Health Counseling Services has a sleep program, "Conquering Insomnia," on the website.
<https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/self-help-library#tab-23>
<http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations>
<https://www.doyogawithme.com/content/yoga-nidra-sleep>
<http://www.quietmindcafe.com/into-sleep.html>

Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

UC Living Fit Forever

http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

Wellness Canvas Site

Please take a look at the new Wellness Canvas Site that contains helpful tools to support student well-being

<https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/288487>

The Schwartz Center Rounds

A multidisciplinary forum where clinical caregivers discuss social and emotional issues that arise in caring for patients. Occurs the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Cancer Center Auditorium:

<https://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/palliativecare/schwartz.shtml>

Wellness Tip: Four Ways to Soothe Nighttime Anxiety

Many of us can struggle with anxiety at night that can interrupt our ability to get the rest we need. Jared Minkel, director of the adult behavioral sleep medicine program at Brown University, video with four steps to help calm the anxious mind and promote sleep.

1. Encourage positive distractions

Focusing all your attention on how you can't get to sleep will only make sleep more difficult. Instead, Minkel recommends distracting yourself with "interesting and engaging imagery," involving as many of your senses as possible. For example, close your eyes and picture a nice beach—can you hear the crashing of waves? Feel the sun on your skin? Taste the salt from the sea?" These kinds of images can then transfer into dream content, so keep it pleasant and positive.

2. Allow worrisome thoughts

If you're unable to sleep because you're fixated on something stressful that's happening the next day—like a big presentation at work, or a confrontation with a family member—it's common to want to push those thoughts from your mind. However, doing so may hurt more than it helps. "Not only will you start to think about these things again, now your arousal will be higher, too," Minkel says. Rather than trying not to think about what's worrying you, he recommends considering what comes after the big event...the

mundane tasks that follow something stressful—like cleaning up your meeting space after the presentation, or going grocery shopping.

3. Practice nightly mindfulness

Often when we're wide awake worrying, we're focused on something that's happening in the future. In those cases, mindfulness can be a powerful antidote as it directs your attention towards what's happening in the present. "You can always focus on your breathing, but it may also be helpful to focus on a physical sensation like how warm and soft your blankets feel," Minkel says. "Anything that helps you focus your attention on something that's happening right now, rather than something that might happen in the future." You can also try a body-scan meditation to relax both your body and mind.

4. Focus on gratitude

Focusing on the good can evoke pleasant emotions and help soothe you to sleep. "For example, rather than thinking what might go wrong, try to focus your attention on something you're looking forward to," Minkel says. "You can also think of something that happened during the last day or two that you are grateful for." It can also be comforting to think of a positive person in your life, or nice deeds other people have done for you "Feeling fortunate or grateful for that person can reduce worry and help you sleep," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu1TaDhEtDY&feature=youtu.be>

All students, staff and faculty are encouraged to contribute wellness stories, tips or recipes to the newsletter.

Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

This month's recipe comes from the wonderful Darolyn Striley, the manager of the Office of Student Development at the School of Medicine. I so appreciate her honesty about cooking as I too am not a big cook and I look forward to trying her lasagna for my next big crowd. Take note students, this could be a great choice for a gathering of friends for a study group (or a fun wellness break with no studying).

"I'm not a big cook, I've been privileged (or strategic?) to have wonderful people in my life that know their tartar sauce from their cream of tartar. You don't want to know how I found out the difference. Here is my favorite [Lasagna](#) recipe for comfort feeding."



Wellness App: Relax Melodies

Relax Melodies is designed to help you, along with their community of 35 million other users, say goodbye to insomnia and get a full night of sleep. If you are having trouble relaxing into a restful sleep, then this is the app for you. Select some relaxing sounds, add a dash of nature, combine with a melody, and hey presto: your sleep inducing melody is complete. A choice of mindfulness meditations can be laid over the top of the mix to lure you soundly to sleep. In addition to creating your own mixes, melodies shared by the Relax Melodies community can be accessed to discover new sound combinations. Integrating your favorite songs from your music library into the sound layers amplifies the soothing experience even further.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/317816.php>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/relax-melodies-sleep-sounds/id314498713?mt=8>

