



DID YOU KNOW?

Getting Better Sleep Can Prevent and Manage Stress

We spend about a third of our life sleeping, yet many of us struggle to get healthy sleep. Getting quality sleep can improve our health.

Sometimes, it can be hard to get quality sleep. A stressful day can keep us awake at night. Really stressful experiences can even rewire our brains, keep us too alert, and get in the way of a good night's sleep. The good news is that there are ways we can improve our sleep and lower stress.

Check out the strategies below and see which ones might work best for you and the people you care about.



Getting quality sleep lowers our stress, gives us energy, and makes us feel good. It also helps calm our brain and body when stressful things happen in our life.

Everyday Practices

Here are some everyday ways to sleep better to prevent and lower stress.

Make a plan and set goals for getting more sleep.

Start by trying one of the strategies below.

- Here are recommended amounts of sleep for all of us:
 - **Infants 4-12 months:** 12-16 hours (including naps)
 - **Children 1-2 years old:** 11-14 hours (including naps)
 - **Children 3-5 years old:** 10-13 hours (including naps)
 - **Children 6-12 years old:** 9-12 hours per night
 - **Teenagers 13-18 years old:** 8-10 hours per night
 - **Adults:** 7-9 hours per night

- Start a consistent sleep schedule for yourself, your kids, or anyone else you support. Try to go to bed and wake up at around the same time each day.
- Establish a calming bedtime routine (for yourself, and your kids if you have them). For example, read a book, take a bath, listen to soft music, or meditate.
- Make sure your sleep area is quiet, dark, and a cool, comfortable temperature. Dim nightlights are okay, if needed.
- Unplug from electronics 30-60 minutes before bedtime.

- Avoid using electronics in bed.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime.
- Try to fit in some physical activity for at least 30 minutes each day.
- If you are having trouble falling asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something calming. Then get back in bed and try again.





Sometimes We Need *a Little* Extra Support

When you are feeling overwhelmed, these supports can help:

If worries are keeping you or your child(ren) from getting to sleep or are waking you up at night, consider:

Strategies for you:

- Read before going to sleep
- Write in a journal
- Create a “To Do Tomorrow” list
- Talk with a trusted friend or relative
- Practice relaxation techniques such as:
 - 4,7,8 breathing (Breathe in for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7, and breathe out for a count of 8. Do this 3 times.)
- Use mindful meditation apps

For young kids:

- Use a nightlight
- Read them a book
- Talk with them about worries that may be keeping them up
- Draw their worries
- Listen to music
- Listen to calming sounds/soft noise from an app or a machine
- Use a weighted blanket (for children over 12 months of age)

Practice relaxation strategies throughout the day, such as mindfulness and breathing or talking to a friend or relative. Find mindfulness resources at [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress).

Be physically active during the day. Learn more about ways to get physical activity at [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress).



Sometimes We Need *a Lot* of Extra Support

When you are going through an extra tough time:

- Ask a health care provider about getting extra help. This could include:
- Community services and programs that help with insomnia and nightmares
 - Discussing whether medications may help
 - Consider free apps:
 - Insomnia Coach: www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/insomnia_coach.asp
 - CBTi-Coach for people who are engaged in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia: www.mobile.va.gov/app/cbt-i-coach

aces aware
SCREEN. TREAT. HEAL.

FOR MORE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS:

Visit [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress) or
Talk to your health care provider