




Getting a better night's sleep

TEENAGERS SHOULD AIM FOR 8-9 HOURS OF SLEEP A NIGHT. LIGHT IS ONE OF THE MAIN INFLUENCERS OF HOW WELL WE SLEEP.

Getting a better sleep routine (if you are not too bad but have been out of a consistent routine)

- Turn off screens in your bedroom at night as the light interferes with sleep hormones and aim for no screen time half an hour before going to sleep
- Aim for at least 1 hour of exercise (preferably outside) a day which will help you get a better nights' sleep - but not too close to bedtime
- Avoid caffeine (coke, tea, coffee, energy drinks) in the 4 hours before bed as it is a stimulant and will keep you awake
- Don't eat a lot just before bed
- Make sure the bedroom is dark - thick curtains etc.
- Avoid very long lie-ins at the weekend
- If anxiety starts at night-time - have a pad and pen next to your bed so you can write down any worries as then you can come back to them in the morning and for now it's off your mind
- Have a routine - go to bed and get up at similar times, and have a wind-down routine: warm bath/shower, reading, relaxation app...



How to get back into a good sleep pattern (if you have been going to bed extremely late and waking very late consistently)

- Your body clock will need re-setting and this will take time - your body clock is extremely sensitive to light.
- There are 7 points, some are similar to the other tips:
 1. Be honest about what time you usually go to sleep. Start going to bed earlier but only by 15-30 mins and slowly add an extra 15 mins every couple of days (Sundays and Wednesdays). If you usually just lie on your bed until you fall asleep you need to stay upright until you plan on going to sleep. Depending on how late you have been going to bed/getting to sleep this could take weeks - so you need to start now to get back on track for September or September will feel dreadful!
 2. Never nap - if feeling tired in the day, get up and do something to chase away the sleepiness
 3. Set an alarm and get up at the same time every day, even at the weekend, to train your body clock. Actually get out of bed and into the light - this is really important, lying in bed on your phone in the dark won't help
 4. Be strict with your new bedtime and get up time
 5. Avoid any type of bright light before bed
 6. Avoid eating or exercising too close to bedtime
 7. Create a relaxing bedtime routine - go to bed and get up at similar times, and have a wind-down routine: warm bath/shower, reading, relaxation app...