SLEEP HYGIENE

Getting the right amount of sleep has many health benefits. It can reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease, and even depression. Getting proper sleep can boost your immune system and help with weight management. Equally important are the brain benefits to getting enough sleep. Getting proper sleep helps to make us more alert, improves our memory recall, and helps us concentrate better. These sound like some great things to have for finals! However, sometimes it can be difficult to make time for sleep in a busy schedule, and sometimes it's hard to fall asleep. Here are some tips for making sleep a priority and getting better sleep!

- **CONSISTENCY.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. This helps train your brain and body to create a consistent sleep pattern.

- **ROUTINE.** Create a relaxing bedtime routine. This helps your brain understand when it's time to go to sleep. Suggested activities include journaling, stretching, warm shower or bath, and drinking sleepy tea.

- **PROTECT THE BED!** Use your bed only for sleep and sex. Don't do homework, watch TV, or do other activities in bed. This will help train your body and brain that being in bed means sleeping (or sex).

- **NAP CONTROL.** Taking naps is fine, but limit them to 20-30 minutes. Excessive napping can make you feel more drowsy, and can interfere with nighttime sleeping.

- **SET THE SCENE.** Sleep experts suggest sleeping in a dark, quiet, cool place. Consider investing in a sleep mask and some ear plugs!

- **TURN OFF THE TECH.** Bright light from phones, TVs, and computers interferes with the release of melatonin, a chemical that signals the brain that it's time to sleep. Stop using technology at least one half hour before bed. It might be tough, but don't use your phone in bed! It will wake your brain up when you are trying to get it to go to sleep.

- **DRINK SMART.** Try to limit the amount of caffeine you consume during the day, and stop drinking caffeine at least six hours before bedtime. Alcohol can also affect your sleep, and experts recommend cutting it off at the same time you cut out caffeine. Nicotine is also a stimulant and should be avoided at night.

- **EAT SMART.** Avoid heavy foods too close to bedtime.

- **EXERCISE.** Getting enough exercise each day contributes to better sleep. Exercising too close to bedtime can interfere with falling asleep though, so don't engage in heavy exercise within two hours of bedtime.

- **TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF.** Experts recommend not having clocks that you can see from your bed. Getting stressed out that you're not asleep yet actually makes it harder to fall asleep. Worrying too much about anything interferes with the brain's ability to calm down and fall asleep, so consider keeping a worry list near your bed. When you find yourself worrying, get up and write down everything you are worried about. Leave it for the morning and go back to bed!

- **GET UP!** If you can't fall asleep, get out of bed and do a calming activity, like reading, coloring, or journaling until you feel sleepy. Experts recommend not lying in bed for more than thirty minutes without falling asleep. Lying there getting stressed about not falling asleep can have a stimulating effect, waking you up when you're trying to settle down to sleep!

Sources: Healthline Media, WebMD, Verywell Health, Sleep Savvy, Pzizz, No Sleepless Nights

SLEEP ROUTINE

Take a minute to plan out a sleep routine to try. See the example below for some ideas!

Goal for sleep time: 10:00 PM

9:00 PM	Turn off electronics
	Cup of sleepy tea
9:05 PM	Write tomorrow's to-do list
9:10 PM	Gratitude journal
9:15 PM	Stretch/yoga
9:25 PM	Get in bed
	Reading
9:55 PM	Lights Out
	Meditation

Goal for wake time: 7:00 AM

Goal for sleep time: _____

Time	Activity
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Goal for wake time: _____

SLEEP DIARY

Track your sleep for a week. Notice any patterns and how different actions throughout your day influence your sleep.

Morning Questions:	SUN	M	T	W	TH	F	SAT
Time you fell asleep							
Time you woke up							
# of wake ups during the night							
Evening Questions:							
# of caffeine drinks today							
Time of last caffeine drink							
Minutes exercised							
Minutes spent napping							

Can't sleep because you're thinking about everything that you need to get done tomorrow? Assorted life worries keeping you awake? Make a list of everything that's worrying you. Tomorrow you can address what you can, but tonight, leave them on the page so your mind can fall asleep!

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