

SLEEP

What happens during sleep?

Sleep is essential for good physical and mental health. In fact, most of the benefits of a good night's sleep directly impact brain functioning. Sleep helps:

- consolidate memory
- promote learning and recall
- increase problem-solving abilities
- improve concentration
- boost mood and reduce anxiety
- sharpen reaction time and accuracy
- clean cellular garbage in the brain

Over 50% of WashU students reported feeling tired, dragged out, or sleepy during the day three or more days of the week.*

*2017 NCHA Survey

**REFRESH.
REFOCUS.
REACH
OUT.**

**AIM FOR 7-9 HOURS
OF SLEEP A NIGHT**

Sleep Hygiene

Daytime

- Wake up within an hour of your "normal" weekday time
- Stop caffeine use around 2 p.m.
- Soak up natural light by spending time outdoors
- Limit any napping during the day to 10-90 minutes before 5 p.m.
- Avoid doing any work in bed – your bed should be a sanctuary of relaxation
- Skip the snooze and set your alarm a little later to keep your sleep cycle uninterrupted

Nighttime

- Set a bedtime and stick to it
- Give yourself at least 30 screen-free minutes before bed
- Avoid caffeine, sugar, chocolate, and nicotine before sleeping
- Avoid using alcohol as a sleep aid – it causes interrupted, less restful sleep
- No large meals before bed
- Focus on calming activities like reading, journaling, taking a bath, or meditating before going to bed

Environment

- Wear clothing/use bedding that you feel comfortable in and won't make you too hot or cold while sleeping
- Eliminate noise – a fan, white noise machine or earplugs can help
- Turn your bedroom into a sleep sanctuary. Create an environment conducive to sleep by making it dark and quiet
- Make sure your bed is comfortable and your pillow and mattress don't cause neck and back pain during the night

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10 Ways to Improve Sleep

1. **Pay back sleep debt gradually** by avoiding morning and evening scrolling through social media feeds and let yourself sleep more.
2. **Reset your biological clock** by exposing yourself to natural light as soon as you wake up.
3. **Avoid sleeping in** until after noon on weekends – this can throw off your circadian rhythm.
4. **Deal with daily stressors.** If you find yourself worrying or thinking too much before sleeping, write your concerns down to deal with them in the morning.
5. **Learn relaxation techniques.** Meditation, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, and deep breathing can help sleep come more quickly.
6. **Exercise!** Aim for 30 minutes, 4 or more days a week. If you feel restless at night, you may need more movement during the day.
7. **Avoid checking the clock.** This only causes arousal and makes it more difficult to sleep.
8. **Take a warm shower or bath.** This nudges nighttime biochemistry along.
9. **Be predictable.** Go to bed and wake up around the same time every day – even on weekends.
10. Discuss **prescription and over-the-counter options** with a medical provider if you're still struggling.

Campus Resources

Habif Health and Wellness Center

Medical Services: 314-935-6666

Mental Health Services: 314-935-6695

Health Promotion Services: 314-935-7139

Visiting Us

Habif is on the lower level of Dardick House on the South 40 on Shepley Drive.

The Zenker Wellness Suite is in the Summers Recreation Center (room 303).

More Information

For chronic sleep problems, you may want to consult with a psychiatrist for a medication evaluation.

habif.wustl.edu



Habif Health and
Wellness Center

STUDENT AFFAIRS AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY