

What Is the Best Sleeping Position?

If you're waking up sore and achy every morning, you may need to evaluate how you're sleeping. Lying flat on your back forces your spine into an unnatural position, which can strain your muscles, joints, and nerves. Your spine isn't meant to be straight, it has three natural curves: one in your lower back, one in the middle of your back, and one near your neck.

Try the following tips to wake up feeling ache free!

- Lie on your side in the fetal position with your knees bent and a pillow tucked between your legs.
- Prop a big fluffy pillow under your knees to reduce pressure on the nerves in your lower back if you must sleep on your back.
- Use a small pillow or a rolled-up towel under your neck as long as it doesn't push your chin too far forward.
- Don't sleep on your stomach. Sleeping facedown can exaggerate the arch at the base of your spine and cause strain.

CU Healthy

HCS wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this

through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website (carleton.ca/health)
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or cu_healthy@carleton.ca.



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How Does Sleep Affect Your ...

Body

- Sleep is a rejuvenating process. Our body's energy supplies and muscle tissue are restored when we sleep. It strengthens the immune system, revives brain cells and reduces fatigue and stress.
- An increase in a molecule that controls metabolism is an adverse reaction of not getting enough sleep. This, in turn, could lead to obesity and obesity related problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and sleep apnea.

Brain

- Sleep has an impact on learning and memory. During sleep the brain recovers parts of memories that have been 'lost' during the day, and memories are stabilized for long-term storage (reviewing your study notes just before sleep can improve your retention).
- Parts of the brain, such as the frontal lobe, do not function well when we are severely sleep deprived. Therefore, lack of sleep adversely affects the electrical patterns of the brain and it cannot function normally.

What Affects Your Sleep?

Caffeine and Nicotine

- Both are stimulants and have an alerting effect, making it more difficult to fall asleep.
- Caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, chocolate) remains in the body on average from 3 to 5 hours. It may disrupt and change the quality of your sleep.

Alcohol

- Alcohol can act as a sedative and put you to sleep quickly. However natural sleep rhythms will be alerted and you will not awake feeling rested.
- Alcohol stimulates the kidneys to produce urine which means more trips to the bathroom!
- Increased urination results in body dehydration and a drop in blood pressure. The nervous system responds with arousal responses such as sweating, fast pulse, headache and nausea, which all keep you awake!

Stress

- A number of things such as school, work, relationships and living environment can cause stress, which can affect the quality of your sleep.
- Stressed sleepers wake up more often and have fewer episodes of deep sleep.

Do You Suffer From Sleep Deprivation?

- Do you usually need a loud alarm clock to wake you in the morning?
- Do you have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep?
- Do you find getting out of bed in the morning a struggle?
- Is your sleep unrefreshing or of poor quality?
- Do you usually feel extremely sleepy or doze off when you are sitting quietly at a lecture or in a theatre?
- Have you found yourself getting extremely sleepy with the urge to doze off when you drive?
- Do you sleep less than 5 hours or more than 9 hours per night?
- Do you have an irregular sleep schedule?

You might want to assess your sleeping habits if you answered yes to any of these questions.

The ABCs of Catching more ZZZs!

- Exercise regularly! But, no strenuous exercise within 2-3 hours of bedtime.
- Don't drink caffeine (coffee, tea, pop) for several hours before bed, or try decaffeinated.
- Cut out heavy meals late in the evening.
- Condition yourself to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day (even on weekends).
- Avoid napping in the daytime.
- Try a warm bath or shower. This decreases your body temperature when you get out, which makes you feel sleepy.
- Drink a glass of warm milk or sleepy time herbal tea for its calming, sedative effect.
- Use the bed for sleep and sex only. No studying or watching TV in bed.
- Don't check the clock. Anxiety about not sleeping will keep you awake. Instead, think about pleasant things.
- If you cannot sleep after 20 minutes, get up and read, or listen to music in a darkened room. Go back to bed when you are sleepy.

