



Summary

Sleep 101

1. There are three processes that determine if you sleep, when you sleep, and how well you sleep. They are:

a. Sleep Need (if you sleep):

- Sleep Need is how much someone needs to sleep at a given time.
- The longer you are awake, the more your Sleep Need builds up.
- When you wake up after a full night of healthy sleep, it's like you just finished filling up your gas tank in preparation for a busy day.

b. Sleep Clock (when you sleep):

- A Sleep Clock is an internal clock that is "set" by the presence or absence of light.
- Each of us has a natural internal clock called a circadian rhythm. This clock triggers our bodies to feel, and do, different things at different times of the day.
- Example of a Sleep Clock throughout a day:
 - 9:00 PM – Melatonin secretion starts. Melatonin is a natural hormone made by your body making sleep more inviting.
 - 2:00 AM – You have your deepest sleep during this time of the night. Your body should be hard at work repairing itself.
 - 7:30 AM – Melatonin secretion stops.
 - 10:00 AM – You will reach your highest peak of alertness and energy. This will help you be the most productive.
 - 3:30 PM – Your body's fastest reaction time. This is the best time for doing physical activities.
 - 5:00 PM – Highest blood pressure of the day.

c. Sleep Disruptors (How well you sleep):

- Sleep Disruptors are factors that disrupt or interfere with our Sleep Need or Sleep Clock.
- Examples of a few Sleep Disruptors:
 - Drugs or alcohol – Research suggests drinking alcohol or using other drugs to help you fall asleep may hurt you in the long run by disturbing the body's sleep-regulating mechanism.
 - Caffeinated drinks – Caffeine can help you wake up in the morning or stay alert during the day. But if you drink it late in the day, it can keep you awake at night when you are trying to sleep.
 - Irregular sleep schedules – If you sleep late on weekends, nap during the day, or work rotating shifts, your body has difficulty maintaining a regular sleep-wake schedule. Those disruptions to your sleep schedule can be long-lasting if not corrected.
 - Medical issues – Medical issues can include medications, chronic pain, depression, combat stress, disturbing thoughts, or memories.
 - Negative emotional states – These include times of high stress, anxiety, depression, combat stress, disturbing thoughts, or memories. Please be aware that there is a difference between times of short-term emotions causing temporary sleep disturbances which may go away and long-term chronic emotions that might be part of a more severe condition that requires medical attention.
 - Illness – Some illnesses involve a great deal of sleeping in the daytime and/or hospitalization.



2. Sleep Hygiene:

- Sleep Hygiene is a term used to describe the things you should and should not do to promote good sleep.
- Sleep hygiene includes both your actions and the environment around you.
- Some examples include:
 - Alcohol – Drinking alcohol creates a broken sleep pattern. You will awaken after the alcohol has been digested. This often happens within 4 hours of falling asleep, and once you are awake, you may have difficulty falling back to sleep.
 - Sleeping with TV on – Your sleep environment should be cool, quiet, dark, and comfortable. A quiet environment will help promote better sleep.
 - Smoking – Nicotine is a stimulant and can make it hard to fall asleep and to sleep well through the night.
 - Using mobile devices in bed – Don't use mobile devices in your sleep environment. Since light is a cue for being awake, keeping your room dark will promote better sleep.
 - Taking naps – Taking a nap reduces your Sleep Need, making it more difficult to fall asleep at bedtime.
 - A comfortable bedroom – Keep your bedroom cool, quiet, dark, and comfortable. Your room should be free of all distractions and a place you associate with sleeping.
- Practicing good sleep hygiene is about making choices that can help promote a normal, high quality night's sleep.