

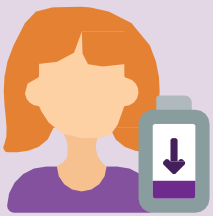
Tips to encourage good sleep in difficult times



The emotions generated by the pandemic, coupled with the anxiety of other concerns that most of us have experienced in one way or another right now, are affecting the quality of sleep for many of us. **Sleep disorders are just symptoms that alert us to potential problems in aspects of wellbeing such as emotional issues and even metabolic or cardiac diseases among others.** In other cases, they are due to unhealthy habits, such as a sedentary lifestyle and constant exposure to screens, or may be a consequence of self-medication of sleeping pills or other factors.

It is normal that there are days when it is more difficult to fall asleep, we wake up in the middle of the night or wake up very early or more tired; but this is not synonymous with sleep disorder itself, **until it becomes frequent or extends for an extended period of time.**

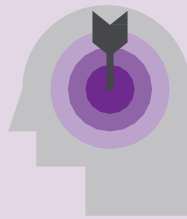
Consequences of a poor sleep include:



Tiredness and daytime drowsiness



Increased risk of occupational and road traffic accidents



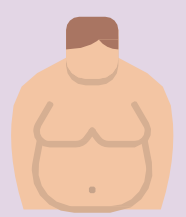
Difficulty concentrating



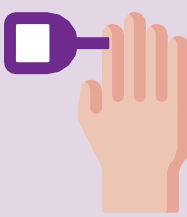
Long-term memory problems



Depressed immune system



Poor body weight regulation



Increased risk of diabetes

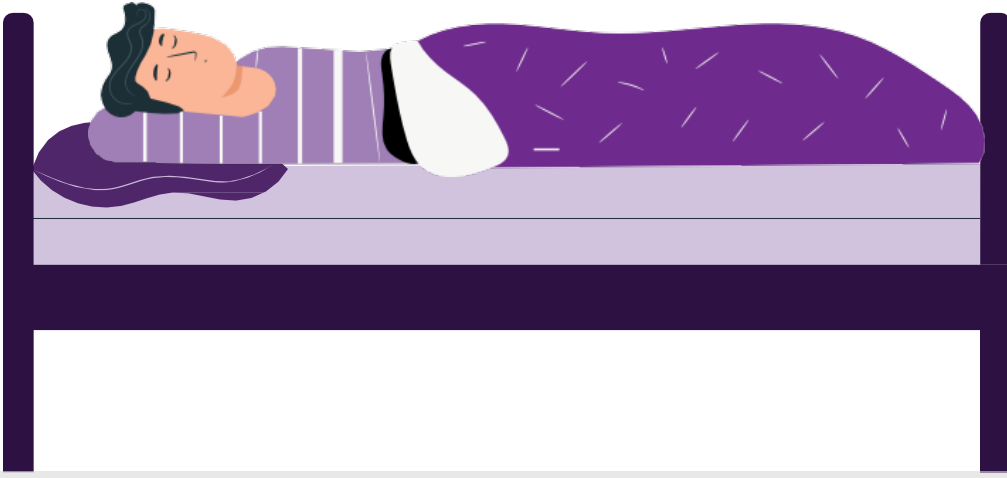


Increased cardiovascular risk



The importance of good quality sleep ensures that during the night's rest metabolic and brain functions are refreshed and regenerated. The required hours of sleep can vary from person to person and can differ as we age. But as a general rule most adults need 7 to 8 hours sleep a night though between 6 and 10 hours would be considered satisfactory.

Good practices to improve the quality of sleep



Follow a routine

Establish a fixed time for going to bed and getting up, including weekends and vacations so you don't disturb your sleep cycles. It is a myth that you can “catch up” on lost sleep at the weekends.



Create a pleasant atmosphere

At bedtime, keep the bedroom dark, quiet, and at a comfortable temperature.

Make sure the mattress and your pillow are comfortable and ensure good posture when sleeping. During the day, avoid using the bedroom as a workplace or for activities that are not related to rest.



Avoid screens just before bed

The blue light emitted by your cell phone, notebook or television affects your sleep.

Look in the settings of your devices how to remove the blue light and avoid using them within 1 hour before going to bed.



Watch your diet

- Eat a light meal in the evening to ensure good blood circulation, hormonal regulation and thus rest. **Finish dinner at least 2-3 hours before bed.**
- Avoid drinking stimulating beverages such as coffee, tea, energy drinks, and soda near bedtime. **Also avoid alcohol as it interferes with the deep sleep phase.** Consume them at least 3 hours before going to bed.
- **Stay hydrated during the day, drink water** so you don't wake up thirsty, but not too close to bedtime so you don't get up to the bathroom.



Don't smoke before going to sleep

Cigarettes also act as a stimulant and can prevent you from falling asleep well.



Avoid physical activity too close to bedtime

Exercise increases your metabolism and raises cortisol, a hormone that affects the regulation of sleep cycles. Complete exercise at least 3 hours before sleeping though a relaxing walk just before bed will improve your blood circulation.



Do some relaxing activity before bed

Avoid situations, conversations, or thoughts that can generate anxiety, tension, or stress. Read something pleasing, take an infusion such as lemon balm or chamomile, listen to good music, take a bath, practice some breathing exercises for the mind, or meditation.