

Sleep, Perchance to dream...

As we get older, our sleep patterns change, but since the pandemic began, many of us have been finding it difficult to drift off, experiencing disruptive sleep or not getting a good night's rest.

And in addition to this, a lack of routine, spending even more time at home, and not getting enough daylight has resulted in us feeling more emotional, irritable, and anxious. Over time, poor sleep quality can have a negative impact on our wellbeing, affecting our cognitive ability, energy, focus and ability to function, making us more susceptible to illnesses.

The good news is, there are healthy sleep habits that we can introduce to our routine to help us get some well-deserved rest, and in turn, protect our physical and mental wellbeing. So, what can we do to improve our sleep?

- Sleep at regular times – aim to wake up and go to sleep around the same time each day. It's recommended that we get 7-8 hours' sleep per night so build in enough time to achieve this. It'll help improve the quality of your sleep and your brain health.
- Limit daytime naps – if you feel the need to nap, it's best to have a short rest (no more than 30 minutes) in the early afternoon so that it doesn't affect your bedtime routine.
- Move more – it's recommended that older people do two types of activity each week- one aerobic and one strength. If you have limited mobility or aren't able to get out, you can do exercises at home with a chair. Age UK have some low impact routines you could try.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine – turn off all digital devices at least an hour before bed and begin to unwind. You could read a book, listen to music, have a bath, or practice a mindfulness technique. Your bedroom should ideally be dark, quiet, tidy and kept at a temperature of around 18°C.

For more practical advice on how to get a good night's rest, watch BWC's short video on the importance of good quality sleep and the steps you can take to achieve it. Remember, if you've tried everything but you're still affected by poor sleep, you should speak to your GP.

[Watch BWC's video on how to improve your sleep.](#)