

A Warrior Needs Sleep to Fight Another Day!

Compiled by Nico Venter
(Student Counselling and Development)


#WellbeingWarriors

T: +27 51 401 2853 / +27 58 718 5125 / +27 51 505 1989 / E: scd@ufs.ac.za / scclqq@ufs.ac.za / scdsouth@ufs.a.za
www.ufs.ac.za/kovsiecounselling

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A woman with voluminous, curly purple hair is sleeping peacefully in a bed. She is wearing a light blue tank top and a pink headband. The bed is covered with white linens, including a pillow and a duvet. In the background, a shelf holds various decorative items: a pink light-up letter 'L', a stack of books, a lit candle in a glass holder, and a yellow glass orb. The scene is softly lit, creating a calm and serene atmosphere.

How often do you hear people complaining that they did not get enough sleep or constantly struggle to sleep? Good quality sleep is important for enhanced cognitive functioning. A lack of good quality sleep has been compared to the same decrease in cognitive functioning as being drunk. Ideally, we should get approximately 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night.

Too little sleep will impair your mental processes, such as concentration and focus. It can also cause fluctuations in your mood, such as depressive or anxiety related symptoms. The opposite also applies in that depression and anxiety may cause sleeping difficulties. All these can have a negative impact on your academics, personal life and health. .

“It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it.”

John Steinbeck

How to improve your sleeping habits
(also referred to as sleep hygiene)

Routine

Go to bed at more or less the same time every night. Research has indicated that students who have a regular sleeping routine tend to perform better at university. A good quality sleeping pattern is more beneficial than quantity of sleep. Thus, it is vital to establish an effective sleep routine

Naptime

Only nap if you need to, and keep it short. A nap shouldn't be longer than 30 minutes. The longer you sleep during the day, the less tired you will be when trying to fall asleep at night. A nap shouldn't be a habit, but only something you do IF you are tired.



Caffeine and/or alcohol

Caffeine is a stimulant that keeps you awake. If used too close to bedtime, it will interrupt your circadian rhythm (your internal clock that regulates the sleep-wake cycle). Although alcohol is a depressant, it acts as a stimulant after a few hours of consumption. You may feel more drowsy after drinking alcohol, but alcohol reduces REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. Disrupting REM sleep can lead to daytime sleepiness and poorer concentration.

Pre-sleep routine

Start to engage in relaxing activities more or less an hour before bedtime. This may include light reading, taking a bath or shower, and drinking non-stimulant drinks, such as rooibos or other herbal teas. Any activities that require physical or psychological stress can lead to heightened energy levels. It is also important to avoid screen-time, which includes the use of tablets or cellphones. The blue light that is emitted by cellphones and tablets decreases the production of the hormone melatonin, which helps us to fall asleep.

Various factors can lead to a decrease in the quality or quantity of your sleep. The lack of proper quality sleep can have a negative impact on your studies and psychological health. By following good sleep hygiene, you can enjoy many benefits such as improved physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Contact us at:

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“Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together.”

Thomas Dekker