

Average Sleep Needs

Age	Average Number of Hours Needed	
	Night-time	Daytime
12 months	11 ½	2 ½
2 Years	11 ¾	1 ¼
3 Years	11	1
4 Years	11 ½	-
5 Years	11	-
6 Years	10 ¾	-
7 years	10 ½	-
8 years	10 ¼	-
9 years	10	-
10 years	9 ¾	-
11 years	9 ½	-
12 years	9 ½	-
13 years	9 ¼	-
14 years	9	-
15 years	8 ¾	-
16 years	8 ½	-



Wakefield CAMHS



Future in Mind Parent / Carer Feedback Form

Session Theme:

Date:

Age of Your
Child:

Facilitators Name:

Please rate the following questions between 0 - 5

How helpful did you find today's session?



Do you feel you were listened to during the session?



Did you learn new strategies to try and use at home?



Would you recommend this session? Yes No

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Thinking about children and young people's emotional wellbeing, is there anything else you would like to learn about?

Following today's session, I am going to...

Mental Toughness Scrapbook

The following guest post is by Amy Morin, a licensed clinical social worker in Lincoln, Maine..



Amy Morin

Psychology often discusses mental health -- but what's not often discussed is a clear definition of mental strength. To me, mental strength means that you regulate your emotions, manage your thoughts, and behave in a positive manner, despite your circumstances. Developing mental strength is about finding the courage to live according to your values and being bold enough to create your own definition of success.

Mental strength involves more than just willpower; it requires hard work and commitment. It's about establishing healthy habits and choosing to devote your time and energy to self-improvement.

Although it's easier to feel mentally strong when life seems simple -- often, true mental strength becomes most apparent in the midst of tragedy. Choosing to develop skills that increase

your mental strength is the best way to prepare for life's inevitable obstacles.

Many exercises exist that can help you develop mental strength. But here are five that can get you started:

1. Evaluate Your Core Beliefs

We've all developed core beliefs about ourselves, our lives and the world in general. Core beliefs develop over time and largely depend upon our past experiences. Whether you're aware of your core beliefs or not, they influence your thoughts, your behaviour and emotions.

Sometimes, core beliefs are inaccurate and unproductive. For example, if you believe that you'll never succeed in life, you may be less apt to apply for new jobs -- and inadvertently, you may not present yourself well on job interviews. Therefore, your core beliefs may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Identify and evaluate your core beliefs. Look for beliefs that are black and white, and then find exceptions to the rule. Very few things in life are "always" or "never" true. Modifying core beliefs requires purposeful intention and hard work, but it can change the entire course of your life.

2. Expend Your Mental Energy Wisely

Wasting brain power ruminating about things you can't control drains mental energy quickly. The more you think about negative problems that you can't solve, the less energy you'll have leftover for creative endeavours. For example, sitting and worrying about the weather forecast isn't helpful. If a major storm is headed your way, worrying about it won't prevent it. You can, however, choose to prepare for it. Focus on what is only within your control.

Save your mental energy for productive tasks, such as solving problems or setting goals. When your thoughts aren't productive, make a conscious effort to shift your mental energy

to more helpful topics. The more you practice expending your mental energy wisely, the more it will become a habit.

3. Replace Negative Thoughts with Productive Thoughts

Although most of us don't spend time thinking about our thoughts, increasing your awareness of your thinking habits proves useful in building resilience. Exaggerated, negative thoughts, such as, "I can't ever do anything right," hold you back from reaching your full potential. Catch your negative thoughts before they spiral out of control and influence your behavior.

Identify and replace overly negative thoughts with thoughts that are more productive. Productive thoughts don't need to be extremely positive, but should be realistic. A more balanced thought may be, "I have some weaknesses, but I also have plenty of strengths." Changing your thoughts requires constant monitoring, but the process can be instrumental in helping you become your best self.

4. Practice Tolerating Discomfort

Being mentally strong doesn't mean you don't experience emotions. In fact, mental strength requires you to become acutely aware of your emotions so you can make the best choice about how to respond. Mental strength is about accepting your feelings without being controlled by them.

Mental strength also involves an understanding of when it makes sense to behave contrary to your emotions. For example, if you experience anxiety that prevents you from trying new things or accepting new opportunities, try stepping out of your comfort zone if you want to continue to challenge yourself. Tolerating uncomfortable emotions takes practice, but it becomes easier as your confidence grows.

Practice behaving like the person you'd like to become. Instead of saying, "I wish I could be more outgoing," choose to behave in a more outgoing manner, whether you feel like it or not.

Some discomfort is often necessary for greater gain, and tolerating that discomfort will help make your vision a reality, one small step at a time.

5. Reflect on Your Progress Daily

Today's busy world doesn't lend itself to making much time available for quiet reflection. Create time to reflect upon your progress toward developing mental strength. At the end of each day, ask yourself what you've learned about your thoughts, emotions and behaviour. Consider what you hope to improve upon or accomplish tomorrow.

Developing mental strength is a work in progress. There is always room for improvement, and at times this will seem more difficult than at other times. Reflecting upon your progress can reinforce your ability to reach your definition of success while living according to your values.

15 Qualities You Need to Develop Mental Toughness

Mental toughness is a huge indicator of success. Here's how to know if you've got it.



By Travis Bradberry



Author, Emotional Intelligence 2.0@talentsmarteq

1 COMMENTS

We all reach critical points in our lives where our mental toughness is tested. It might be because of a toxic friend or colleague, a dead-end job, or a struggling relationship.

Whatever the challenge, you have to be strong, see things through a new lens, and take decisive action if you want to move through it successfully.

It sounds easy. We all want good friends, good jobs, and good relationships.

But it isn't.

It's hard to be mentally tough, especially when you feel stuck. The ability to break the mold and take a bold new direction requires that extra grit, daring, and spunk that only the mentally toughest people have.

It's fascinating how mentally tough people set themselves apart from the crowd. Where others see impenetrable barriers, they see challenges to overcome.

When Thomas Edison's factory burned to the ground in 1914, destroying one-of-a-kind prototypes and causing \$23 million in damage, Edison's response was simple: "Thank goodness all our mistakes were burned up. Now we can start fresh again."

Edison's reaction is the epitome of mental toughness--seeing opportunity and taking action when things look bleak.

There are habits you can develop to improve your mental toughness. In fact, the hallmarks of mentally tough people are actually strategies that you can begin using today.

1. Emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of mental toughness. You cannot be mentally tough without the ability to fully understand and tolerate strong negative emotions and do something productive with them. Moments that test your mental toughness are ultimately testing your emotional intelligence (EQ).

2. Confidence.

"Whether you think you can, or think you can't--you're right." --Henry Ford

Mentally tough people subscribe to Ford's notion that your mentality has a powerful effect on your ability to succeed. This notion isn't just a motivational tool--it's a fact. A recent study at the University of Melbourne showed that confident people went on to earn higher wages and get promoted more quickly than others did.

True confidence--as opposed to the false confidence people project to mask their insecurities--has a look all its own. Mentally tough people have an upper hand over the doubtful and the skittish because their confidence inspires others and helps them to make things happen.

3. The ability to neutralize toxic people.

Dealing with difficult people is frustrating and exhausting for most. Mentally tough people control their interactions with toxic people by keeping their feelings in check. When they need to confront a toxic person, they approach the situation rationally. They identify their emotions and don't allow anger or frustration to fuel the chaos. They also consider the difficult person's standpoint and are able to find common ground and solutions to problems. Even when things completely derail, mentally

tough people are able to take the toxic person with a grain of salt to avoid letting him or her bring them down.

4. Knowing how to embrace change.

Mentally tough people are flexible and are constantly adapting. They know that fear of change is paralyzing and a major threat to their success and happiness. They look for change that is lurking just around the corner, and they form a plan of action should these changes occur.

Only when you embrace change can you find the good in it. You need to have an open mind and open arms if you're going to recognize, and capitalize on, the opportunities that change creates.

You're bound to fail when you keep doing the same things you always have in the hope that ignoring change will make it go away. After all, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

5. Saying no.

Research conducted at the University of California in San Francisco showed that the more difficulty you have saying no, the more likely you are to experience stress, burnout, and even depression. Mentally tough people know that saying no is healthy, and they have the self-esteem and foresight to make their noes clear.

When it's time to say no, mentally tough people avoid phrases such as "I don't think I can" or "I'm not certain." They say no with confidence because they know that saying no to a new commitment honors their existing commitments and gives them the opportunity to successfully fulfill them.

The mentally tough also know how to exert self-control by saying no to themselves. They delay gratification and avoid impulsive action that causes harm.

6. Knowing that fear is the No. 1 source of regret.

Mentally tough people know that, when all is said and done, they will lament the chances they didn't take far more than they will their failures. Don't be afraid to take risks.

I often hear people say, "What's the worst thing that can happen to you? Will it kill you?" Yet, death isn't the worst thing that can happen to you. The worst thing that can happen to you is allowing yourself to die inside while you're still alive.

It takes refined self-awareness to walk this tightrope between dwelling and remembering. Dwelling too long on your mistakes makes you anxious and gun shy, while forgetting about them completely makes you bound to repeat them. The key to balance lies in your ability to transform failures into nuggets of improvement. This creates the tendency to get right back up every time you fall down.

7. Embracing failure ...

Mentally tough people embrace failure because they know that the road to success is paved with it. No one ever experienced true success without first embracing failure.

By revealing when you're on the wrong path, your mistakes pave the way for you to succeed. The biggest breakthroughs typically come when you're feeling the most frustrated and the most stuck. It's this frustration that forces you to think differently, to look outside the box, and to see the solution that you've been missing.

8. ... Without dwelling on mistakes.

Mentally tough people know that where you focus your attention determines your emotional state. When you fixate on the problems that you're facing, you create and prolong negative emotions and stress, which hinders performance. When you focus on actions to better yourself and your circumstances, you create a sense of personal efficacy, which produces positive emotions and improves performance.

Mentally tough people distance themselves from their mistakes, but they do so without forgetting them. By keeping their mistakes at a safe distance, yet still handy enough to refer to, they are able to adapt and adjust for future success.

9. Refusing to let anyone limit your joy ...

When your sense of pleasure and satisfaction is derived from comparing yourself with others, you are no longer the master of your own happiness. When mentally tough people feel good about something they do, they won't let anyone's opinions or accomplishments take that away from them.

While it's impossible to turn off your reactions to what others think of you, you don't have to compare yourself with others, and you can always take people's opinions with a grain of salt. Mentally tough people know that regardless of what people think of them at any particular moment, one thing is certain--they're never as good or bad as people say they are.

10. ... And not limiting the joy of others.

Mentally tough people don't pass judgment on others because they know that everyone has something to offer, and they don't need to take other people down a notch to feel good about themselves.

Comparing yourself with other people is limiting. Jealousy and resentment suck the life right out of you; they're massive energy-stealers. Mentally tough people don't waste time or energy sizing people up and worrying about whether or not they measure up.

Instead of wasting your energy on jealousy, funnel that energy into appreciation. When you celebrate the success of other people, you both benefit.

11. Exercising.

A study conducted at the Eastern Ontario Research Institute found that people who exercised twice a week for 10 weeks felt more socially, intellectually, and athletically competent. They also rated their body image and self-esteem higher. Best of all, rather than the physical changes in their bodies being responsible for the uptick in confidence, which is key to mental toughness, it was the immediate, endorphin-fueled positivity from exercise that made all the difference.

12. Getting enough sleep.

It's difficult to overstate the importance of sleep to increasing your mental toughness. When you sleep, your brain removes toxic proteins, which are by-products of neural activity when you're awake. Unfortunately, your brain can remove them adequately only while you're asleep, so when you don't get enough sleep, the toxic proteins remain in your brain cells, wreaking havoc by impairing your ability to think--something no amount of caffeine can fix.

Mentally tough people know that their self-control, focus, and memory are all reduced when they don't get enough--or the right kind--of sleep, so they make quality sleep a top priority.

13. Limiting caffeine intake.

Drinking excessive amounts of caffeine triggers the release of adrenaline, the source of the fight-or-flight response. The fight-or-flight mechanism sidesteps rational thinking in favor of a faster response to ensure survival. This is great when a bear is chasing you but not so great when life throws you a curve.

When caffeine puts your brain and body into this hyper-aroused state of stress, your emotions overrun your behavior. Caffeine's long half-life ensures you stay this way as it takes its sweet time working its way out of your body. Mentally tough people know that too much caffeine is trouble, and they don't let it get the better of them.

14. Not waiting for an apology to forgive.

Mentally tough people know that life goes a lot smoother once you let go of grudges and forgive even those who never say they're sorry. Grudges let negative events from your past ruin today's happiness. Hate and anger are emotional parasites that destroy your joy in life.

The negative emotions that come with holding on to a grudge create a stress response in your body, and holding on to stress can have devastating consequences (both physically and mentally). When you forgive someone, it doesn't condone their actions; it simply frees you from being their eternal victim.

15. Being relentlessly positive.

Keep your eyes on the news for any length of time, and you'll see that it's just one endless cycle of war, violent attacks, fragile economies, failing companies, and environmental disasters. It's easy to think the world is headed downhill fast.

And who knows? Maybe it is. But mentally tough people don't worry about that because they don't get caught up in things they can't control. Instead of trying to start a revolution overnight, they focus their energy on directing the two things that are completely within their power--their attention and their effort.

Bringing it all together.

Mental toughness is not an innate quality bestowed upon a select few. It can be achieved and enjoyed.

What else makes people mentally tough? How many of these 15 qualities describe you?.

Taken from wikihow

Strengthening Your Mind

1

Read everything. Recent studies show that people who enjoy reading novels are more easily able to empathize with others, a sign of a strong and well-rounded mind.^[1] If you want to work on increasing your mental strength, read a variety of things that you enjoy.

- You don't have to jump straight into reading *Ulysses* if you want to improve your mental strength, and in fact trying to read something too difficult might turn you off reading entirely. Instead, focus on reading things you enjoy. Westerns, romance novels, and long-form magazines are all good ways to read.
- Try replacing an hour of television each evening with reading, instead. Invest the time that you might normally spend idling, chatting with friends, or watching the tube in reading a good book.

2

Try to learn something new every week. Ever get the feeling that each day looks a lot the same? As we get older, our mental pathways are more and more defined.

Where each summer day seemed to last forever when we were kids, the weeks peel off more quickly as you age. Mental strength requires that you continue building new neural pathways by learning new things.^[2]

- The more regularly you pick up a new skill, or study a new subject, the stronger your mind becomes. Try to pick up one new thing every week, then continue working on it as you learn new things. Build up your mental strength gradually.
- wikiHow is a great resource for learning new things. Learn how to play chess, change your oil, or play guitar.

3

Socialise more. "Book smarts" are important, but it's also important to understand how things play out in the real world. Social intelligence and wit are important parts of all-around mental health and well-being. If you can't carry on a conversation, work on your social skills along with your mental health building skills.

- Have complicated conversations instead of gossiping. Talk about things that are important to you, or things that you've been learning. Try starting or joining a book club in your area.
- Try to meet lots of different kinds of people. If you're in school, don't stick to just one social group, but move around. If you're an adult, try to meet people from socio-economic situations different from your own. Hang out with your plumber, and hang out with your doctor.

4

Challenge yourself. Try things that you're not sure you'll be able to pull off. Decide that you're not only going to learn guitar, but that you're going to learn to shred a fast solo note-for-note. Decide that you're not only going to play chess, but that you're going to study openings and learn to play like a grandmaster. Keep working on a task until you're at the difficult setting.

- Video games are a mixed bag when it comes to mental strength. Some research shows that video games aid in problem solving, fine motor skills, logistics, and analysis.^[3] Other research points to the negative effects of violence and social isolation associated with video games, decreasing moral sensitivity and attention span.^[4]
- Nourish yourself with complex entertainment, and avoid click-bait. If you've ever seen a long newsreel and thought, "Jeez, TLDR" then it's probably time to unplug a little. Reading BuzzFeed or watching YouTube videos of epic fails is like eating three Skittles at lunch. Reading a book or watching a documentary is like eating a meal.

2.

5

Exercise your mind regularly. Just as you can't build muscle by eating cake for three weeks straight before you start lifting at the gym, so too you can't gain mental strength by goofing off and then focusing only every now and then. Being consistent with brain exercise is more important than the intensity of the workout.

- Even just doing a cross-word puzzle or a sudoku every day may decrease your chances of losing mental awareness as you become older while increasing your verbal fluency.^[5]

Improving Concentration

1

Do one thing at a time. Splitting your attention among multiple tasks makes the quality of thought that you're giving to each task less. A recent social and psychological study revealed that chronic multi-tasking in a variety of interactive media makes us poorer students, workers, and less efficient learners.^[6]

- Start prioritizing the most important things you have to do each day, and just focus your attention there. Write out a list to start the day, and work through it.
- Finish one thing before starting another. Even if you find something challenging, stick with it until you're done. Switching between tasks is often more difficult than finishing something you've started.

2

Take frequent short breaks. Recent studies show that as short a break as five minutes every hour results in more efficiency than a single long break in the middle of a workday.^[7] Let your brain rest and refresh, to give yourself the best chance of staying mentally strong throughout a difficult task.

3

Get rid of distractions. For lots of people, the chatter of the radio in the background, or the noise of the television is part of almost every minute. If you have a lot of white noise and static in your life, try replacing it with soft relaxing music. Let yourself focus on doing one thing only, instead of trying to entertain yourself while you work.

- Focusing more on what you're doing will have the added benefit of letting you finish your work more quickly. If you're trying to watch a show at the same time, it'll take longer.

- Want to really eliminate distraction? Get off the Internet. When you're trying to study and Facebook is only a click away, it's awfully tempting to mess around. Use a web-blocker or a site-blocker if you can't unplug yourself.
- 2.

4

Be here now. It may sound overly simple, but one excellent way of focusing your attention back to a task when you find your mind wandering is to remind yourself, "Be here now." Don't think about what you're eating for lunch, or what you're doing later tonight, or what's going to happen his weekend. Just be here now and do what you're doing.^[8]

- Try using a keyword mantra, if you don't like "Be here now." Pick a password or a keyword from what you're doing. If you're doing math homework, make it "math" or another related vocab word. When you notice your attention waning, repeat the keyword until you can re-focus.

Part 3

Calming Your Mind

1

Be optimistic. Go into each task you perform assuming that you will succeed. Having the right attitude will ensure that your mind is focused in the right places, staying clear of the negative thoughts that can drag you down.^[9] Emotional support and strength starts within.

- Practice visualization to help with positive thinking. Try actually closing your eyes and "watching" yourself succeed in the task before you. Whatever it is, try to picture yourself doing it correctly and finishing.

2

Let go of petty thoughts. To stay calm and positive, try to let go of petty ego-driven thoughts and concerns, and focus on what's most important. Is what you're wearing

important? Is where you're going for dinner? Is what you're going to do this weekend critical to your well-being and mental health? Probably not.

- Stop comparing yourself to other people. It's not good to do better than someone else, or to beat someone else, it's just good to improve your own abilities. Focus on improving yourself, not winning.

3

Assume the best intentions of others. Don't go looking for something to make you angry or frustrated. Take things at face value and don't over-think your interactions. Your boss probably isn't singling you out and picking on you irrationally. Your friends probably aren't spreading rumors about you behind your back. Stay strong and be confident. You've got this.

- Stay out of other people's business as much as possible. Don't spread gossip or be a collector of gossipy stories. Focus on yourself.

4

Meditate. Taking a bit of time in your day to slow down and focus your thoughts can help you build a strong and calm mind. Meditation doesn't have to be a strange or mystical experience, either. Just find a quiet place and sit for 15-45 minutes each day. That's it.

- Sit comfortably and focus on your breathing. Feel your breath going in and nourishing your body. Feel it leaving your body and entering the world.
- Watch your thoughts come and go without identifying with them. Just let them happen. Stay unattached from them. Focus on your breath.

5

Listen to Baroque Music. Recent studies have shown that baroque music has the amazing ability to attain a state of deep concentration and focus by preparing alpha brain state in your mind which helps you to boost your learning vocabulary, memorizing facts or reading.

- Select some good baroque music tracks and make a habit of listening to them regularly in your free times or while your working or studying.

6

Do physical exercise as well as mental exercise. Exercise releases endorphins in your brain, which help to calm and strengthen your brain.^[10] Getting 30 minutes of exercise a few days a week will help you to stay calmer and more mentally strong. Additionally, one form of exercise that helps the mind relax and can greatly improve mental toughness, is yoga.



THE
GOOD-NIGHT
GUIDE FOR
CHILDREN



Sleep is extremely important to support children's development both physically and mentally. Establishing good sleep patterns can help children to meet their full potential. This short guide for parents and carers will develop awareness of the importance of sleep and offer advice around what to do to prevent sleep issues occurring. It is also packed full of tips on how to manage sleep issues that may arise.



READ ON TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- * The importance of sleep
- * Sleep cycles
- * How much sleep is needed
- * Good sleep routines
- * Common sleep problems
- * Night terrors and nightmares
- * Teenagers and sleep
- * Creating a calm bedroom
- * Choosing an appropriate bed
- * Useful resources



THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

Sleep is essential to support children's development. Well rested children are more able to meet their full potential in every aspect of their lives. Listed below are just a few of the symptoms of sleep deprivation in children:

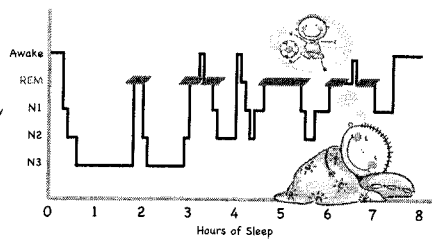
- * Growth or hormone issues
- * Concentration difficulties
- * Mental health issues
- * Lowering of the immune system
- * Hyperactivity
- * Weight gain
- * Behavioural issues
- * Difficulty remembering things

Parents who are disturbed by their child's poor sleep patterns are also likely to suffer from sleep deprivation. A well-rested household usually makes for a happier home.

SLEEP CYCLES

At night time we experience different levels of sleep and we sleep in cycles. REM and Non-REM sleep are different stages but both essential to keep us healthy. The diagram shows an example of how these cycles occur. We get our deep sleep towards the beginning of the night and our lighter sleep in the early hours of the morning.

After each sleep cycle (usually around 90 minutes, though less in infants) we come to a point of partial awakening.



If everything is as it was when we fell asleep then we may just roll over and carry on sleeping. If anything has changed however... that's when we wake up! This is why it is important that a child's sleep conditions remain the same through the night. A child who needs rocking to sleep is highly likely to wake up after each sleep cycle and need a parent to rock them back to sleep. Likewise a child who has learned to fall asleep watching a lullaby show is likely to need this condition back in place to be able to nod back off.

THE STAGES OF SLEEP ARE AS FOLLOWS:

* Non-REM Sleep

Stage 1 - a very light sleep, where your child will be easily woken. If you've ever tried tip toeing out of their bedroom and they've woken up then this is why - they were in a very light sleep.

Stage 2 - still quite a light sleep but the body is preparing for the deep sleep that is about to come. Your child will be more relaxed now and if you are trying to sneak out of their bedroom then this is a good time to make your exit!

Stage 3 - this is a very deep sleep. The body needs this sleep so that repair can take place. Your child will be difficult to wake when they are in this stage.

* REM sleep

REM sleep, or rapid eye movement sleep as you may hear it referred to, is when dreams occur. It is vital for mental and emotional development. Our brains can become very active during REM sleep yet our bodies are relaxed.



CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

- what it is and what it does

We all have an internal body clock, sometimes referred to as a circadian rhythm. Our body clocks take their cue from light and dark, which can be confusing for some children when in winter we spend much of our time in darkness. It is important that we strengthen our children's body clocks so that they develop a regular sleep and wake up time. Putting them to bed at the same time each night will help, as will waking them at the same time each morning – even at the weekend! Sometimes children's body clocks can go off track, for example when changing the clocks from winter time to summer time. If bedtime has crept backwards you need to gradually reset your child's body clock by bringing it forwards by 15 minutes every three nights until you reach the desired time.

MELATONIN

Melatonin is a hormone that occurs naturally in our bodies when it gets dark. It is produced at night time to help us go to sleep. This is why it is a good idea to put your child to bed in a dark environment and to dim the lights in the run up to bedtime. Melatonin production is interfered with by screen activities for example watching television or playing on a computer. The light from the screens will stop the melatonin being produced as effectively therefore it is best to avoid these activities in the hour leading up to bedtime.

Some children, particularly those on the autistic spectrum, are prescribed melatonin to help with their sleep issues. Good sleep hygiene should still be maintained as the melatonin will not work as effectively if your child is not comfortable, relaxed and in an appropriate bedroom environment.



HOW MUCH SLEEP IS NEEDED?

Sleep needs change as children get older. Most three year olds will need around 12 hours of sleep and will be starting to drop their daytime nap. Naps in the daytime do help pre-school children to avoid becoming over-tired. Ironically an over-tired toddler is harder to get to sleep than a well-rested youngster. Naps in pre-school children should be encouraged and scheduled so that they aren't too close to bedtime.

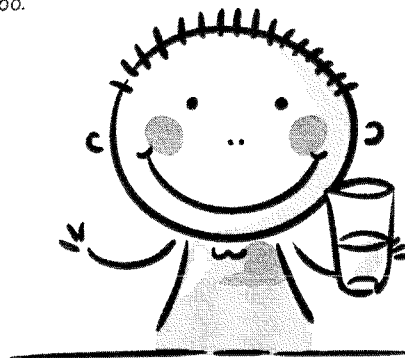
Children around the age of four to six years old need between 10.5 and 11.5 hours of sleep on average. And as they move through school they are likely to need around 10 hours each night. Teenagers' sleep needs will be addressed later in the guide - they need around eight to nine hours but often get much less than this.

It's important to remember if your child sleeps less or more than the average it's not always an issue!

GOOD SLEEP ROUTINES

Everybody can benefit from having a good sleep routine - even grown-ups! A good sleep routine needs to be planned well in advance. Consistency and firmness are also key.

Firstly you need to consider what time bedtime will be and then work backwards, planning the hour leading up to it in some detail. If your child isn't settling until late you may need to gradually move their bedtime as previously described, the routine will need to be gradually moved too.



Here are some tips for devising the ideal bedtime routine:



- * Make sure bedtime is realistic, if your child isn't falling asleep until 11pm there is no point starting a routine at 6pm
- * Turn all screens off in the hour before bedtime
- * Dim the lights, close the curtains if needs be and create some darkness to help to promote the melatonin (sleep hormone) production
- * Offer quiet activities that are motivating to your child. Fine motor skill activities are perfect to aid relaxation eg jigsaws, colouring in, threading, building with bricks etc.
- * Consider introducing supper time. Slow releasing carbohydrates are great for keeping little tummies full. Dairy products are also very calming at night time. Avoid anything sugar loaded or containing caffeine
- * Baths are great if your child finds them relaxing. If however they are fearful of them or get over-excited they may not help in the bedtime routine. Ideally a bath should take place 30 minutes before bedtime as this aids relaxation by increasing the body temperature. It is the slow decrease in body temperature that helps us to feel more relaxed and nod off more easily
- * Get ready for bed in the same order - for example, pyjamas on, tooth brushing, toilet
- * Once in bed spend some time reading a bedtime story with your child
- * Give hugs and kisses and tell your child 'it's night time, go to sleep'
- * Wake them up at the same time each morning to help to strengthen their body clock

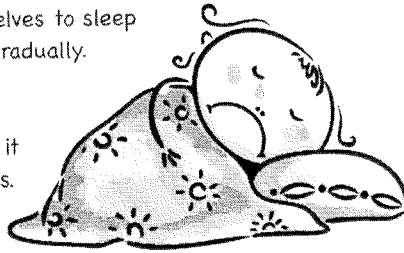
COMMON SLEEP PROBLEMS

* Self-settling

The biggest difficulty is often that children can't settle themselves to sleep at the start of the night. Some children need a parent in bed with them or rocked in a pushchair or even driving around in a car to be able to fall asleep. Once they come up through the sleep cycle to a point of a partial awakening and they find the conditions have changed they need attention. Teaching children to soothe themselves to sleep can be done gently and gradually.

* Changes in Routine

When routine is changed it can impact on sleep issues. Christmas for example is a wonderful time of the



year but in January many families are still struggling to get their children to sleep. Sticking to routine as much as possible is helpful and will ensure your child feels secure.

* Feeling Hungry or Thirsty

Adding in a supper time can help with the hunger pangs at night. If a child is thirsty then offer them water. Diet is important and what is consumed during the day can impact on sleep. It is best to avoid anything sugar loaded during the evening such as biscuits and cakes. Caffeine is a stimulant so tea, coffee, cola and even hot chocolate are best avoided in the run up to bedtime. Good choices are anything calcium based such as yoghurt, fromage frais or a glass of milk. Porridge is a great supper time snack or even a banana smoothie.

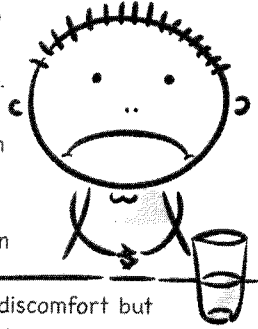
* Discomfort

The bed needs to have a supportive mattress. This is particularly important for growing children. An unsupportive bed can result in aches and pains leading to problems in adulthood. According to BackCare, youngsters need a supportive bed as much as, if not more than an adult. Their research found that an increasing number of teens and even younger children are suffering back problems.

Some children may be uncomfortable due to medical conditions for example children with eczema may find it hard to get comfortable at night time. Youngsters who

are unwell or teething may also have issues getting comfortable which will impact on their sleep.

Common colds can make children feel uncomfortable and disrupt sleep patterns. A child who has recently had a hospital admission may also find their sleep is disrupted. This can be due to discomfort but can also be caused by a change in environment.



* **Fear/Anxiety**

Some children may genuinely be fearful of the dark. Stories normalising this fear can be helpful and there are lots of lovely ones available. Children may also want a parent with them during the night. Some children take comfort from having a parent's T-shirt over their pillowcase so that they have their familiar scent close by. Where fear or anxiety is severe it may be necessary to seek advice from your GP to see if more specialist support is required.

* **Night Time Wetting**

Bed wetting is common in children. The likelihood of it occurring decreases as a child gets older. Maintaining a consistent approach is useful and if your child does wet the bed try to change them in a dimly lit environment with as little interaction as possible. If you are concerned about bed wetting you can seek advice from your health visitor or school nurse.

* **Sensory Issues**

Sometimes children have sensory issues that impact on their night time sleep. For example if your child is very noise sensitive during the day they are likely to be the same at night time. This means that the central heating clicking on for example could wake them very easily. Some find that white or pink noise or even music can help with this issue. Children need consistency so make sure the same conditions are used throughout the night. Likewise some children are very touch sensitive and do not want to be covered at night time. This can result in them becoming too cold and waking in the early hours as a result.

NIGHT TERRORS AND NIGHTMARES

Night terrors and nightmares often get confused. Here are our tips on telling them apart and how to handle them:

Night Terrors

- * Usually happen shortly after going to sleep
- * Your child will appear to be terrified but is actually asleep
- * Your child won't take comfort from you

What to do:

- * Wait for the terror to pass and then settle them back to sleep
- * When these are regular try rousing your child 10 minutes before they usually happen for two weeks to break the cycle
- * Children usually grow out of night terrors, if you are concerned consult your GP

Nightmares

- * Are bad dreams that children wake from
- * Your child will take comfort from you

What to do:

- * Reassure them that it was a dream
- * Don't reinforce the nightmare – there is no need to look under beds for monsters as they don't exist remember!



TEENS AND SLEEP

In the modern world everything is 24/7 and there are far more entertaining things to do than sleep when you are a teenager. Many teens enjoy spending their evenings gaming, surfing the net or on social media sites and quite often these activities can run well into the night.

Teens do tend to feel more alert later in the evening and more tired in the morning as a result of changes in their biological clocks.

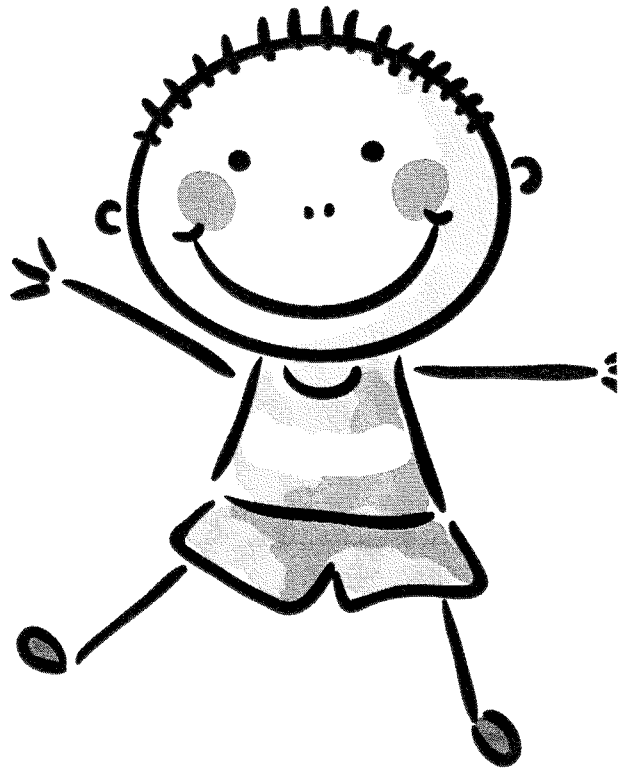
Try to share with your teen why sleep is important. A good night's sleep can help them to:

- * Have spot-free skin
- * Maintain a healthy weight
- * Grow
- * Have more energy
- * Remember information for exams
- * Concentrate at school, leading to them getting a better job and more money



Some general tips to share with your teens include:

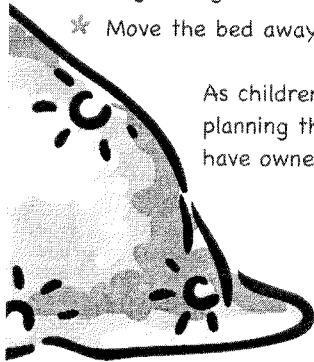
- * Avoiding energy drinks in the evening and anything that is sugar-loaded or full of caffeine
- * Doing the same things at the same time each night can help to promote better sleep
- * Turning off gaming equipment and screens an hour before bedtime can make falling to sleep much easier
- * Checking whether the bed is comfortable, if not you may need to invest in a new one. Teens should be encouraged to try different mattresses to select one that they find comfortable
- * Exercising regularly, three times weekly can help with sleep problems
- * Decluttering the bedroom can help. It's hard to switch off when you are sleeping in a messy environment
- * Try zoning areas of the bedroom for school work, play and sleep



CREATING THE PERFECT SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

A restful bedroom environment is important when addressing sleep. We all fall to sleep more easily when we are in a comfortable environment. Here are some top tips to help you create a restful bedroom:

- * Make sure the room is well aired
- * The temperature should be around 16–20 degrees Celsius
- * Choose suitable curtains to darken the environment. Blackout blinds can be particularly helpful in the summer months
- * Avoid over stimulating colours in the bedroom such as bright red. Try calming colours such as neutrals and pastel shades
- * A quiet room can encourage better sleep. Check what noises can be heard from your child's room
- * Eliminate electronic devices from the bedroom. If this isn't possible, try to separate areas of the bedroom for sleep and play. It's important that children and teens know that the bed is a place for rest
- * Freshly laundered bedding is important
- * Cover over toys if they are causing a distraction at night or zone off the room so that they are out of sight
- * Check whether the mattress and the pillows are comfortable
- * Are there any posters that may appear to be frightening when the lights are off?
- * Move the bed away from the radiator



As children get older you can involve them in planning their bedroom design so that they have ownership of it.

BEDS AND MATTRESSES

The age at which a child is ready to move out of a cot into a bed varies but is generally between 18 months and three years. A cot bed or smaller-scale starter bed may help initially to make the transition to a single bed.

* Bunk beds

Make sure you ensure your bunk bed is safe – there are safety standards (BS EN747) and regulations (entrapment hazards) in place which manufacturers and retailers should comply with. Check the bunk is thoroughly stable; that there are two guard rails on the upper bunk (*even if it's going to be against a wall); any ladder must be firmly secured; and catches and fixings are not accessible or prominent enough for small fingers to fiddle with. Children under six years are not advised to use the top bunk.

* How often should I change a child's mattress?

Parents should aim to change the child's bed and/or mattress at significant growth periods. This may require several bed changes – for example a teenager who's suddenly shot up to 6ft plus needs a bed that will enable his feet to stay on the mattress and not hang over the end! The right mattress is vital as it must provide the correct support for growing bones and muscles. That means sufficient support to hold the spine in correct alignment and sufficient comfort layers to cradle the body's contours.



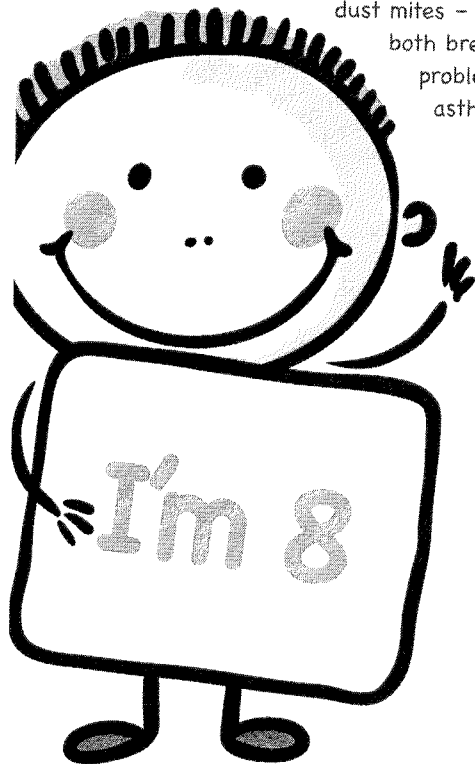
*** Mattresses explained**

The mattress construction can be either foam or sprung. A mattress and bedding with hypo-allergenic fillings (i.e. avoiding known irritants such as feathers or hair) may be required for a child with asthma, eczema or rhinitis.

Mattresses containing memory foam are generally not recommended for young children. If your mattress is going to be used on a bedstead or base bought separately, always check your choice is suitable for use with the type of bed base you have (slatted, mesh etc).

Don't buy second hand or use hand me down mattresses! It will not provide the support and comfort needed for growing children and could be a health or safety hazard. As well as obvious wear and tear from body weight, it is estimated that we lose around 280 ml (half a pint) of body moisture every night and shed around 0.45 kilos (1lb) of skin particles in a year. Apart from being a pretty unpleasant thought, this creates the perfect habitat for

dust mites – which can aggravate both breathing and skin problems such as asthma and eczema.



CARING FOR CHILDREN'S BEDS

Caring for children's beds should follow the same lines as caring for adult beds. Here are some simple dos and don'ts:

- * Do air the bed to cool and dry it by throwing back the bedclothes for around 20 minutes before remaking
- * Don't sit on the edge of the child's bed. This will weaken the edge of the mattress and base by concentrating weight in the same small area
- * Sprung mattresses (unless they are specifically described as non-turn) should be turned over every week for the first month and thereafter every three months (or according to the manufacturers' instructions). All mattresses should be rotated occasionally head to foot. Turning helps the upholstery fillings to settle down evenly
- * Don't leave polythene wrappings on new mattresses - this could lead to dampness, mildew and rotting through condensation build up during sleep
- * Don't let children bounce on the bed - it damages the mattress and could hurt the child
- * Don't roll up a mattress to store or squash into a car - this can cause permanent damage
- * Do put washable protective covers on the mattress and the pillows. Breathable waterproof covers are also a good idea for younger children
- * Occasionally - every few months - the mattress and base should be vacuumed to remove dust and fluff. For eczema and asthma sufferers vacuum weekly. This should be carefully and gently done - so as not to dislodge fillings by pulling on tufts and buttons
- * Do ensure covers and bedding, including pillows and duvets, can be washed regularly at 60°C or more

STAINS

If an accident occurs immediate treatment helps enormously by preventing the liquid seeping into the upholstery filling, where it can cause problems.

If possible, after stripping off all bedding, stand the mattress on its side – this will help prevent the fluid penetrating the mattress. Sponge immediately with cold water – but don't over water. Here are some recommended treatments for specific fluids:

* **Urine**

Sponge with warm solution of mild detergent or upholstery shampoo. Then wipe with cold water plus a few drops of antiseptic such as Milton.

* **Vomit and diarrhoea**

Scrape up as much solid matter as possible, without spreading the stain. Treat as for urine above.

* **Fruit juices**

Use proprietary stain treatment – following instructions – or sponge with warm borax solution and then clear water. A strong coloured drink such as blackcurrant will probably leave a stain.

* **Tea, chocolate, coffee and milk-based drinks**

Treat as above and when dry use an aerosol grease solvent to clear grease – being particularly sparing if used on a foam mattress. Brush to clear deposit.

* **Blood**

Use a proprietary stain remover, or upholstery cleaner, followed by cold water.

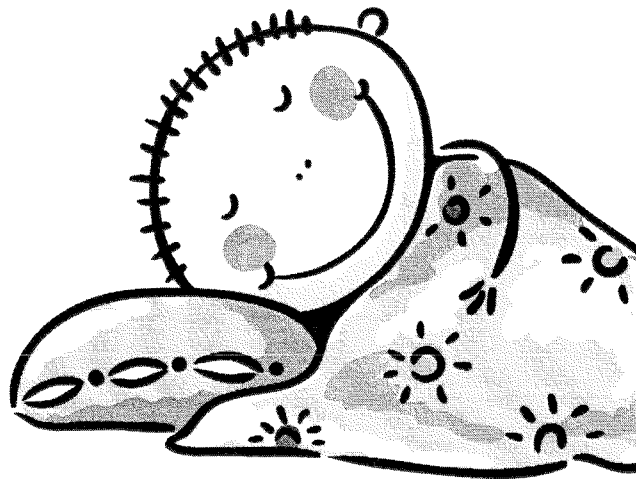
* **Oily marks**

Use an aerosol grease solvent to draw stain out, rather than liquid grease solvents.

SUMMARY

All children are individuals and will have individual sleep needs. The following points are important to remember:

- * Children pick up on your anxiety, try to remain calm as bedtime approaches
- * A bedtime routine is extremely important to support your child in relaxing. Bedtime routines need some thought and forward planning, being consistent is essential
- * Consider what may be causing the sleep issues and then you can identify the most appropriate strategy to address it. Discuss these with an appropriate professional such as a health visitor, school nurse or sleep practitioner
- * It takes children time to learn a new behaviour including during the night. Follow through any changes you make for at least two weeks to begin to see an improvement
- * Make sure that your child is comfortable in their bed and that the bedroom environment is a relaxing one



RESOURCES

If your child's sleep issues are causing concern you should speak to your GP. In some areas of the country there are sleep practitioners who are trained to offer support around sleep difficulties. Some children may need referring to a sleep clinic within a local hospital if medical issues are suspected to be causing the problems.

Below are some organisations that you may find useful:

Allergy UK

www.allergyuk.org

Helpline: 01322 619898

Asthma UK

www.asthma.org.uk

Advice line: 0800 121 62 44

BackCare

www.backcare.org.uk

Advice line: 0845 1302704

Enuresis Resource and Information Centre

(bed wetting)

www.eric.org.uk

Helpline: 0845 3708008

National Eczema Society

www.eczema.org

Helpline: 0800 089 1122

The Children's Sleep Charity

www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk

Tel: 07912 667676

The Lullaby Trust

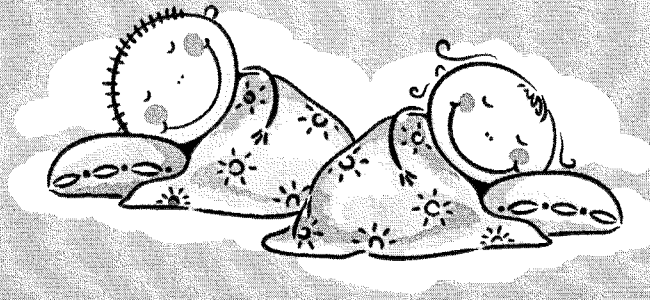
www.lullabytrust.org.uk

Advice Line: 0808 802 6869



THE GOOD-NIGHT GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

This guide has been written for The Sleep Council by Vicki Dawson, founder of The Children's Sleep Charity, which aims to support children and their families to get a better night's sleep. As a qualified teacher with a specialist in teaching children with special educational needs, Vicki is passionate about supporting families to get a better night's sleep. Having once been a sleep deprived mum, she recognises the impact that sleep deprivation has on the whole family. Vicki has received training from Sleep Scotland and Solent NHS Trust. She works in partnership with the sleep team at Sheffield Children's Hospital and has launched an accredited sleep practitioner training programme and workshop. Vicki is also co-author of the book 'Sleep and Your Special Needs Child' which was published in May 2014.



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