

Stress and Sleep

Getting the proper amount of sleep is extremely important and can have a dramatic effect on your health and well-being. Lack of sleep can lead to issues such as weight gain, hormone imbalances, decreased brain and immune system function, depression, and an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure. Sleep is too important to skip, aim for 7-9 hours (adults) and 10-11 hours (school age children) a night to protect your mental health, physical health, and quality of life.

Sleep and Stress: Are They Related?

YES, in more ways than one! Sleep deprivation can lead to an increase in stress levels and stress is a common cause for sleep issues! So, what can we do to find the balance between stress and sleep? A healthy diet, regular exercise, and stress management techniques are a great place to start.

How To Sleep When You're Stressed:

1. Develop or improve your existing sleep regimen. Set a regular time to go to bed, regardless of whatever else is occupying your time. Learn to plan everything else around the bedtime you set yourself. As well as a regular going-to-bed time, establish a regular waking up time. They are equally important balances to keep you well rested.

2. Remove distractions or sources of keeping you awake. Often small things can disrupt or prevent sleep. Make your bedroom comfortable for sleep. A cool, dark, quiet, uncluttered room can improve your slumber.

- Avoid screen time before bed, unplug and try a relaxing activity such as reading or journaling.

- Avoid eating too much or too little. A full stomach and hunger both hinder sleep.

- Empty bladder before bed and avoid caffeine intake during the day by mid-afternoon at the latest.

3. Finish any jobs on your "to do" list. If these are done or at least worked on enough to get them to where you are happy to leave them be for now, they won't be used by the mind as a way to stay awake. This may be as simple as doing any outstanding housework such as tidying the kitchen, putting away your papers or finishing your homework. Also, making a "to-do" list can take away worries and clear the mind.

4. Calm your mind and body. Find a calming bedtime routine that works best for you. Aromatherapy, a warm bath or shower, relaxing music, meditation and gentle stretching are great ways to relax your mind and body.



Weekly Challenge: Start by holding a V-Sit for 10 seconds, add 5 seconds everyday to work your way up to a 45-second hold by the end of the week.



V-Sit Form: Start sitting tall (shoulders back and chest lifted) on the floor or a mat with knees bent and feet flat on the ground. Extend arms straight in front of you and slowly lean back without rounding your back. Hold this position or lift feet off the ground into a V shape.