



# How to...



## SWEET DREAMS

Sleep research shows that the average person spends about two hours dreaming each night.

# Get a better night's sleep

**Feeling rested and energized can help make you happier and healthier.**

Most tweens and teens need about 9 to 11 hours of sleep to be their healthiest and do their best in school. However, studies consistently show most kids aren't getting enough sleep. That can affect everything from your ability to concentrate in class to your mood around your family and friends. Here are some ways you can get your sleep habits on track.

### Set a regular bedtime

When you go to bed around the same time every night, your body gets used to the schedule and you fall asleep more easily. To figure out what your bedtime should be, think about when you have to wake up and work backward, counting the hours to pinpoint what time you need to be in bed. If you want to get 10 hours of sleep and have to wake up at 7 a.m., you would need to be asleep by 9 p.m.



**Be sure to clock enough rest!**

### Relax before bed

Give yourself an hour to wind down before bedtime so your body and mind are ready for sleep. Split the hour into three 20-minute segments. Start with 20 minutes to prepare for the next day (you can pack your backpack and lay out your clothes). This helps you go to bed with a calm mindset and saves you time in the morning. Then

set aside 20 minutes for hygiene (shower and brush your teeth). Finally, for the last 20 minutes, do something relaxing that helps you fall asleep more easily (like reading a book or listening to calming music).

### Avoid sleep stealers

Things you do during the day can also affect your sleep. Try to avoid drinks and food with caffeine (like soda and chocolate) in the afternoon and evening.

Exercise can help you feel tired, but working out within two hours of your bedtime can make it hard to wind down. Try not to text or play video games in the two hours before bedtime either—the light from the screen can make your body think it's daytime.

### Stay consistent

It's tempting to sleep in on weekends, but oversleeping can mess up your sleep rhythms for the week. Wake at your usual time, or close to it, so you can stay well rested all week. It can take two weeks or longer for your new sleep routine to work. If you can't sleep after 20 minutes of lying in bed, you can get up and do something else, like sitting in a comfortable chair to read, until you feel tired enough to drift off to sleep.

## 3 benefits of sleep



**Greater strength** Sleep can help you feel better physically because it can give your muscles time to grow and recover after exercise. Studies show that getting enough sleep helps basketball players score more shots and football players sprint faster.

**Better concentration** Most mental activity is enhanced by sleep. That includes memory, problem-solving, handling emotions, and judgment.

**More creativity** If you're feeling stuck on how to solve a problem, you may be more likely to come up with a creative solution after a short nap, according to research.