

Sleeping Secrets: How to Wake up Feeling Refreshed

Most people have probably heard the oft said statement "we spend one third of our lives sleeping". However, we frequently read claims from health experts that Brits are not getting enough sleep, which is leading to an increase in stress and illness in our lives.

So what's so important about sleep anyway? Well - one way to understand how important sleep is, is to look at what happens when we don't get enough. Most people will be familiar with the effects of short term sleep deprivation, perhaps after an all night session on the town; grumpiness, irritability, forgetfulness and inability of concentrate. If the sleep deprivation continues, delusions and hallucinations can begin.

There are several key factors that affect the quality of sleep, including light levels, noise, how tired you are, and also your natural sleeping tendencies; some people are very deep sleepers so are less sensitive to external disturbances, whereas light sleepers are cursed with a low sensitivity threshold, and thus are more likely to be woken by light and noise.

A comfortable bed also plays a very important role in the quality of sleep. At one time, beds were little more than a pile of straw or other soft plant materials, but by building [beds](#) off the ground, people soon realised that they could avoid drafts, dirt and various house pests. In some countries however, sleeping on the floor is still the norm - for example Japan, where the vast majority sleep on a futon cushion that is directly placed on the floor.

If you are sharing a bed with a partner, you'll almost certainly need at least a double bed (rather than a small double) to be comfortable; anything smaller than a double is likely to lead to a cramped night. It's also vital to buy a firm mattress; spend some time shopping around and testing several different types of mattress before you buy.

Sleep experts also suggest several other things to help get a better night's sleep; firstly ensure that you set a regular bedtime and avoid long naps during the day. Remove possible distractions from your sleeping space, such as TVs, computers, books and magazines. Fit decent blinds or curtains to your bedroom windows, or wear an eye mask to block out light; avoid drinking any caffeinated drinks after lunch, take regular exercise and use a good supportive pillow.

If you follow these secrets to slumber, you're soon be enjoying deeper sleep, and waking up feeling refreshed and recharged.

About the Author

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Source: <http://www.tntarticles.com>