



How exercise can help improve your sleep

Did you know it's World Sleep Day on Friday 17 March?

A good night's sleep is the foundation for good health. And yet, so many of us find it hard to fall and stay asleep. Question: When was the last time you woke up feeling refreshed and ready for the day? If you're struggling to remember, know that you're not alone. In fact, around one in every three people in the UK is thought to suffer from insomnia (NHS).

Fear not. There are a number of things you can try to improve your sleep and one of the most effective is movement and exercise. Plenty of scientific studies have proven the relationship between exercise and good sleep. Committing to exercise could get you into a wonderful sleep-exercise cycle that leaves you feeling energised and well-rested.

Here are four ways exercise can help you sleep better:



1 - Reduces stress and anxiety

Anxiety and stress are sleep's biggest enemies. Regular exercise and movement can help ward off the worries that keep you from getting a good night's sleep. When you exercise, your brain releases feel good chemicals that help to combat stress and anxiety.

2 - Tires your body out

Moving during the day, even if it's cleaning the house or walking to the shop, can increase your sleep drive and reduce sleep onset - the time it takes you to fall asleep. The truth is, the more you move, the more your body pushes you to sleep at night. This is not a matter of working yourself to exhaustion, but instead committing to some movement every day.

3 - Resets your body clock

Exercising outdoors and getting natural light helps your body to establish a positive sleep-wake cycle. It tells your body when to be alert (in the morning) and when to wind down (at night). Even if you plan to exercise indoors in the morning, open the curtains, draw the blinds and let as much light in as possible.

4 - Alleviates daytime sleepiness

It may sound counterintuitive, but exercise can actually boost your energy level throughout the day. In turn, this can reduce the need to nap or rest during the day and ultimately increases your chances of having a better night's sleep.

TRY THIS TODAY

If you can't sleep tonight, get out of bed and do something relaxing.

It's important you associate your bed and bedroom with sleep. If you remain in bed whilst you're struggling to sleep, you may start to link this space with a place of stress and frustration. If you don't fall asleep within 20-minutes, get up, remove yourself from the room and do a relaxing activity in a room with low light. Avoid screens and anything that over-stimulates the brain.

