

# Stress coping strategies

## ***Get a good night's sleep***

Don't burn the candle at both ends.

Sleep is essential for the body to function properly. If you are short of time it may seem the obvious answer is to go to bed later or get up earlier, but reducing your sleep by even a small amount can really take a toll on you, making you bad-tempered, reducing your energy levels, affecting your ability to think clearly and increasing your stress levels.

It's not just the amount of sleep you get that matters but also the quality of that sleep. A better night's rest will increase your stamina, productivity, mental sharpness and have emotional benefits too.

The average adult needs between 7.5 and 9 hours sleep each night.

Sleep is essential for the body to function properly. It is during sleep that our bodies have a chance to recharge their batteries; sleep replenishes our energy levels. If we don't get enough sleep we can be tired all day long.

When your body is sleep-deficient it goes into a state of stress. Stress leads to a loss of sleep and loss of sleep leads to increased stress – it's a vicious cycle which needs to be broken.

When you don't get enough sleep your body's functions are put on high alert which causes an increase in blood pressure and the production of stress hormones. Higher blood pressure increases your risk of heart attacks and strokes. The stress hormones unfortunately make it harder for you to sleep. If you need to make up for lost sleep, have a nap during the day rather than getting up late. If you wake up naturally without your alarm going off it probably means you've slept enough.

Different people need a different amount of sleep but adults usually need between 7 and 9 hours per night.



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# Stress coping Strategies

## *Get a good night's sleep - continued*

You should try not to eat right before bed – especially heavy or rich food which may take a lot of work for your body to digest. And avoid caffeine alcohol and tobacco several hours before bedtime. Although you may feel that alcohol helps you get to sleep – it's not

good quality sleep and may lead to addiction. Caffeine and tobacco keep you awake and alcohol interferes with REM sleep.

It's a good idea to develop a relaxing bedtime routine, starting around an hour before you plan to go to bed.

You shouldn't rush around or do exercise or watch a thriller or read a scary book or do anything that gets your adrenaline pumping right before you go to bed because it takes time for your body to settle down.

Have a look at further information in this article from Psychology today – <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/high-octane-women/201105/has-sleep-and-stress-become-vicious-cycle-in-your-life>

And Help Guide – How to Sleep Better – Tips for getting a good night's sleep - [http://www.helpguide.org/life/sleep\\_tips.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/sleep_tips.htm)