Do you want to improve your grades, immunity to disease, athletic performance, mood, and remove nasty gunk from your brain?

Then get to sleep!

On average, people need 7–9 hours of sleep per night.

Good sleep...

- Improves focus, attention, processing, and retention of information which means you study more efficiently and perform better on your exams
- Decreases irritability, depression, anxiety, loneliness, and emotional reactivity which means you feel happier, more connected, and are better able to manage stress
- Impacts the release of hormones that help you to feel full and resist food cravings which means you are better able to maintain a healthy weight
- Increases your immunity to disease which means you are better able to fight off colds and infections
- Improves athletic performance and speeds up reaction times which means you perform better in your sport
- Allows the glymphatic system to flush out waste from the brain which means your brain is clearing out neurotoxins accumulated during the day to enhance its health
- Decreases risk for high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke which means you live a longer and healthier life
Controlling your sleeping environment, or paying attention to what we call Sleep Hygiene, is often the first step in getting better sleep. Some of the things you CAN control in your quest for good sleep include:

- **Clean and comfortable bed, pillow, bed clothes, and PJs.** Whatever you sleep in, reserve it for going to sleep, and make it comfortable.

- Your room needs to be as **dark as possible and a cool temperature** (60-65 degrees).

- **Use your bed for sleep and sex only.** The brain develops associations between things, and you want your bed to be associated with the pleasure of these activities.

- **Get some exercise.** Studies from Ohio State University and University of Pennsylvania found that any regular exercise will improve your sleep quality.

- **Limit caffeine use.** The recommended dose of caffeine is up to 400mg per day, or about four 8 oz cups of coffee.

- **Monitor alcohol use.** Alcohol is a sedative but it is also a sleep disrupter; it may help you relax and get to sleep, but it interrupts sleep later in the night as it’s metabolized.

- If you struggle with indigestion or acid reflux, **try not to eat any big meals two to three hours before bedtime.**

- **Reduce screen time before bed** and put your smart phone on “night shift” to block blue light. Artificial light tricks your body into thinking it is daylight, which suppresses melatonin, your sleep hormone. This means you have to be willing to unplug from social media and manage FOMO to look after yourself.

- Try to go to bed and get up at approximately **the same time every day.** This allows you to work in harmony with your circadian rhythms.

Go to [sleep.org](https://sleep.org) for more information

[northwestern.edu/breathe](https://northwestern.edu/breathe)

[instagram.com/northwesterncaps](https://instagram.com/northwesterncaps)