

TO YOUR HEALTH

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The Power of Sleep: Your Foundation for Health

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Sleep is often overlooked, yet it is one of the most powerful tools we have for maintaining health, promoting healing, and enhancing well-being—especially as we age. Both the **quantity** and **quality** of our sleep play crucial roles in how we feel, move, and function each day.

Sleep is important for our bodies — from the brain, heart, and lungs — to energy, protection against disease, and mood. It also affects our ability to function during the day. A good night's sleep can help us learn, create new memories, respond quickly, solve problems, pay attention, make decisions, and be creative.



Older adults may find that sleep patterns naturally change with age. However, this doesn't mean poor sleep should be accepted as the norm.

In fact, research from the National Institute on Aging shows that older adults still need **7 to 9 hours** of restful sleep per night to support optimal health.

Our bodies are guided by an internal clock called the **circadian rhythm**, which influences when we feel alert and when we feel sleepy. This rhythm is highly sensitive to light, activity, and consistency. Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day, even on weekends — helps reinforce this natural cycle and improves overall sleep quality. Disruptions to our circadian rhythm can lead to fragmented sleep, lower energy, and reduced immune function.

One of the most effective ways to support sleep is by creating a strong **bedtime routine**. Your routine sends signals to your brain that it's time to slow down. Start by dimming lights an hour before bed, turning off screens or using blue light filters, and engaging in calming activities. This might include light stretching, deep breathing, journaling, or reading a physical book under a soft light.

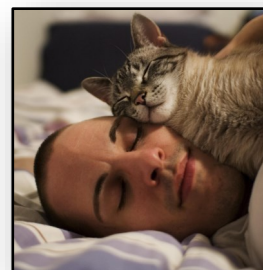
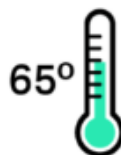


Using the principle of **habit stacking**—pairing a new habit with an existing one—can make these wind-down routines easier to adopt. For example, you might follow brushing your teeth with five minutes of quiet



meditation or pair putting on pajamas with a brief gratitude practice. Small, repeatable actions done in the same order each night can cue the body to relax.

Our **sleeping environment** matters, too. A cool, quiet, and dark room promotes deeper, more restorative rest. Studies suggest that room temperatures between **60–67°F** are ideal for sleep, as our body temperature naturally drops in preparation for rest. Consider using blackout curtains, a white noise machine, or even weighted blankets if they help you feel more comfortable.



continued



Getting the right amount of high-quality sleep is foundational to your health. It strengthens the immune system, supports memory and cognitive function, balances mood, helps regulate weight, and allows the body to repair itself. Every system in the body is dependent on it. Whether you're fighting off a cold, recovering from illness, or simply aiming to prevent health issues before they begin, sleep is not optional—it **is essential**.

Prioritizing sleep is one of the most loving and proactive things you can do for your body and mind. Better sleep doesn't happen by chance—it happens by design. Start with small changes, build a relaxing evening routine, and let your habits work in your favor. Your future self will thank you!



- Develop a regular sleep schedule and bedtime routine.
- Avoid napping in the late afternoon.
- Keep your bedroom quiet and at a comfortable temperature.
- Try to avoid electronic screens such as TVs and cell phones.
- Exercise at regular times each day, but not within three hours of bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and large meals late in the day.

Source: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/sleep/6-healthy-sleep-habits-older-adults>

Spotlight on Social Work



The No-see-ums is a small but dedicated group at CWV, united by a shared interest in vision-related issues. If you've ever been curious about Eschenbach magnifiers, the science behind AREDS, or the latest on Syfovre, you might find our discussions illuminating.

Our most recent conversation took an unexpected turn—into the world of fonts. Who knew that Times New Roman could stir such passions? Or that Garamond might prompt raised eyebrows? The debate between Serif and Sans Serif was enlightening.

After much discussion the No-see-ums agreed on the following principles

- Use **bold** type where emphasis is needed.
- Choose font sizes larger than 16.
- Sans Serif fonts such as Helvetica and Arial are preferred; ornate or “curly” fonts are hard to follow.
- Keep fonts consistent throughout a document—no unexpected switches.
- Line spacing of 1.5 and left alignment improve readability.
- Use white paper with bold, high-contrast text.
- A mix of upper and lower case is important. All caps are hard to read.
- Columns can make reading easier than long lines of text.
- Be aware: 3, 5, 8, and 0 are easily confused—choose clear, distinct typefaces.
- Matte finishes on paper help reduce glare and eye strain.

If any of this speaks to you—or if you're just curious why everyone has an opinion about font size—we welcome you to join the conversation. The No-see-ums are always looking for new members.