

C MENTAL HEALTH MONTHLY

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Let's Talk About Sleep- you know, that magical thing where you close your eyes and wake up (hopefully) ready to conquer the world. For young people, sleep isn't just important; it's like upgrading to the latest OS for their brains and bodies. Yet somehow, over 75% of high school students are skipping this crucial nightly update, according to the CDC.

But hey, no judgment—life is busy, and prioritizing sleep can feel as impossible as getting through a Netflix series without "just one more episode." That's where this newsletter comes in. With a few small changes, you can help yourself or kids turn their sleep habits from “meh” to marvelous. Think consistent schedules, screen-free zones, and bedtime routines that don't involve scrolling social media until 2 a.m. Ready? Let's make healthy sleep happen.

Consistency is Key (Weekends Too)

Consistency is crucial when it comes to a healthy sleep routine. Young people should try to go to bed and **wake up at the same time every day**—even on the weekends! It's okay to enjoy a little flexibility, but keeping weekend sleep schedules within two hours of weekday times helps their bodies stay in sync. A regular routine supports natural sleep cycles and ensures they get the rest they need.

Think of it this way: Our internal clock likes predictability. Throw it off, and it's like asking a GPS to navigate through Mordor—it'll eventually figure it out, but it'll take longer and there'll probably be orcs. So stick to that schedule—less stress, fewer orcs.

You wake up in the afternoon to save breakfast money.



**KEEP WEEKEND SLEEP SCHEDULES
WITHIN TWO HOURS OF WEEKDAY
TIMES TO HELP YOUR BODY KEEP
IN SYNC.**

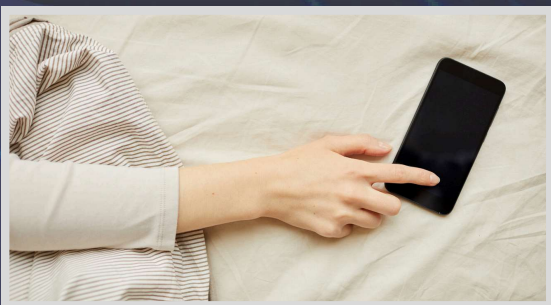
Resist Screens Before Bed

Let's be real—putting down our devices feels about as natural as eating oatmeal for dessert. But if you're serious about better sleep (and avoiding the morning zombie shuffle), it's time to embrace the art of unplugging. The blue light from screens isn't just bad for sleep—it's like your brain's version of a double shot of espresso. And don't even get me started on the time warp of social media scrolling.

Here's how to make the tech detox a family affair:

- Wrap up screen-based homework before dinner whenever possible—bonus points if the kids help clear the table afterward.
- Set a "screen-time curfew" by powering down all electronics—even TVs—at least an hour before bed.
- Keep bedrooms as tech-free zones. Phones and tablets can camp out in the kitchen overnight—they'll be fine without a nightlight.

And parents, lead by example. If you're binge-watching that new show while lecturing your kid about screen-free habits, you're basically waving a flag that says, "Do as I say, not as I do." Show them that life offline doesn't just exist—it's actually pretty great.



Me: I need to go to sleep earlier

Also me:



Nighttime Routine

A calming bedtime routine is like the opening credits to a great night's sleep. It sets the tone, eases the mind, and lets everyone know it's time to relax—minus the dramatic theme music. Sit down with your child to co-produce their evening routine; giving them creative control makes it more likely to stick.

Teens: For the TikTok generation, this might mean logging off social media (gasp), hopping in the shower, and winding down with some chill music or journaling. Think low effort, high zen.

And hey, let's remember—it's about what works best for your child. Bonus points if it doesn't involve you storming into their room like a bedtime drill sergeant, yelling "Lights out!" for the fifth time. Let's keep it peaceful, folks.

Create a Sleep-Friendly Space

Let's talk about creating the ultimate sleep sanctuary—a place where teens can actually fall asleep instead of lying awake contemplating the mysteries of the universe or what their favorite celebrity posted on Instagram. A good sleep environment should be quiet, dark, and chill (literally and figuratively). Here are some ways to make it happen:

Use earplugs or a fan for white noise—because even the most zen teen can't sleep through a barking dog or a sibling's questionable taste in music.

Invest in room-darkening curtains. Think "vampire lair" but, you know, less creepy.

Add a soft night light if total darkness is too "horror-movie basement" for comfort.

Take the time to ask your teen what makes their space relaxing—bonus points if they don't ask for neon LED lights that pulse like a rave at 2 a.m. Oh, and let's keep the bed for sleeping, not for midnight snack crumbs or TikTok marathons. This isn't a college dorm room (yet).

Resources

- [Sleep Hygiene - Teen Handout | CHOC Children's](#)
- [Sleep tips: How to help your teen get a good night's sleep](#)
- [Sleep-Tips-for-Teens.pdf](#)

Sources

Much of the content in this newsletter was adapted from the Prevention Action Alliance's article on healthy sleep habits, which provides valuable insights for parents and teens.
[Prevention Action Alliance- Know! To Create Healthy Sleep Habits](#)



Avoid Relying on Sleep Aids

When you or your child has trouble sleeping, it might be tempting to turn to a nightly sleep aid, like melatonin. However, recent studies show that the actual melatonin content in over-the-counter products can vary widely—sometimes much more or less than the label states. These products may also contain unlisted chemicals.

While short-term use of melatonin is generally safe, relying on sleep aids over time could have harmful effects on a young person's growth and development. The good news?

Most kids don't need sleep aids to get the rest they need. Consistently following the sleep tips above can make a big difference, though it might take a few weeks to see results. If your child continues to struggle with sleep, reach out to your doctor before introducing any sleep aids. They can help identify underlying issues and suggest safe solutions.

Bottom line? If you can't pronounce the ingredients in a sleep aid, maybe skip it and try these other tips first.