

# sleep & learning



Sleep is essential for brain functioning.

- Sleep impacts many things including memory, focus, energy levels, mood and mental health, and our immune systems. Most people need on average 8-8.5 hours of sleep and research shows negative impacts on health and performance on 6 hours even if you don't notice feeling sleep deprived.

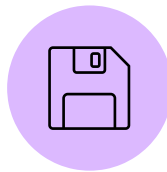
***Sleeping improves exam performance more than cramming.*** Studies show that 8+ hours of sleep is associated with improved marks and giving up sleep for extra revision can even reduce performance.

## WHY SLEEP MATTERS FOR LEARNING



### Clearing mental storage

When we sleep the brain clears out unimportant information from the day, making more memory space for what you want to learn and remember.



### Long-term memory

Important information gets moved to long-term memory during sleep. Not sleeping well makes us less likely to remember what we've learned.



### Problem solving

Our brains problem-solve while we sleep. Something difficult will be easier to try again after some rest.

## STRATEGIES FOR BETTER SLEEP

- ✦ Keeping a consistent schedule helps regulate your internal clock.
- ✦ 20-30 minutes of sunlight daily - especially in the morning hours.
- ✦ Physical activity (even just a walk) improves sleep quality & helps you feel tired - avoid exercising in the 90 minutes before going to sleep.
- ✦ Avoid caffeine after 2pm as it has a half-life of 8 hours.
- ✦ Try not to work from bed so that your brain doesn't associate your bed with being awake and alert.
- ✦ Avoid looking at screens (even with blue light filters) 1 hour before bed - light exposure worsens sleep and reduces dopamine levels for the next 3 days lowering your ability to focus and think.
- ✦ Create a pre-sleep routine for the hour before bed sending signals to your brain that it's time to sleep.
- ✦ Put away unwanted thoughts by writing them down or imagining putting them in a box to look at in the morning.
- ✦ If you can't fall asleep, remember that just resting is still beneficial &/or get up and do something boring until you feel sleepy.