

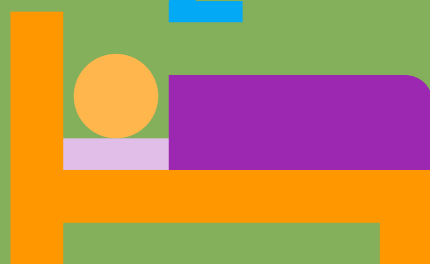
# Sleep



## EDUCATION

Sleep problems are one of the most common complaints after concussion. People often sleep more than normal in the initial days and weeks following a concussion as brains and bodies need rest to recover. For some, sleep problems may persist and can impact other areas like mood, stress, and thinking. Insomnia (difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep), daytime sleepiness, and increased fatigue are common challenges.

The following are tools to help with sleep problems after the first few days or weeks after concussion. Talk to your healthcare provider if sleep problems continue after trying these strategies.



## STRATEGIES

Maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Try going to bed and waking up around the same time. Stick with a similar schedule on the weekends. Aim to get 7 or more hours of sleep per night.

Keep your bedroom quiet, cool, and dark.

Exercise. There is good evidence that regular exercise, including stretching and aerobic exercise, helps with restful sleep. Avoid exercising 3-4 hours before bed to be relaxed when you need to fall asleep.

Get outdoors. Regular exposure to natural sunlight can help sleep quality.

Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Relaxing rituals prior to bedtime may include a warm bath or shower, aromatherapy, reading, relaxation exercises, or listening to soothing music. This will relax your body and distract your mind.

Avoid stimulating activities before bed like watching an exciting movie or playing a competitive video game.

Keep electronics out of the bedroom. Your bedroom should be for sleeping only. Avoid screen time 30 to 60 minute before bed. Blue light from screens can interfere with the brain's signals to the body that it is time for sleep.



Don't use alcohol to help you sleep as it interrupts your sleep cycle.

Go to bed when you are sleepy. If you are not asleep after 20 minutes, then get out of bed, keep the lights off, and go into another dark, quiet area. Relax. Once you feel sleepy again, go back to bed. Repeat as needed.

Avoid naps. If you must take a nap, try to keep it short (no more than 20 minutes) and 8 hours before bedtime. Try not to take a nap after 3 p.m. so that you can fall asleep at night.

Limit caffeine. This includes coffee, tea, soda, and energy drinks. Avoid any caffeine after lunchtime.

Consult your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications for sleep, including vitamins and minerals, to make sure that what you are taking is safe and helpful.

Keep your bedtime routine the same even if you didn't sleep well the night before. Sleeping in late can reinforce sleep problems. Increasing caffeine and energy drinks the next day can keep you up again the following night.

## TECHNOLOGY

- Look for fitness watches, like [Fit Bits](#) or [Apple Watches](#), that have sleep tracking features to help you monitor your sleeping habits.
- Try using an app like [Relax Melodies](#) or [Pzizz](#) to help you relax and fall asleep. [Sound machines](#) can work too.

