

How to Cope with Poor Sleep

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First of all, great job for being here! You are on your way to coping with your sleep disorder in a healthy way, so give yourself a good pat on the back - your willingness to live a better life deserves it!

Before you can do anything to improve your sleep pattern, you first need to learn the basic concepts of sleep. This sentence may have surprised you since sleeping is something you have been doing ever since you were born. However, as strange as it may seem, that doesn't mean we necessarily understand the connection between sleep and mental health. Which is why here we will deal with common misconceptions, such as the amount of time you should sleep, as well as everything else you need to know about that sweet slumber.



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Sleep Disorders

This is the collective name for all troubles with sleep, and understanding what they are ^[1], is the best way to find out if you are a loved one may be struggling with one. One of the most commonly known sleep disorder is insomnia ^[2], which is not measured by the amount of sleep a person loses, but rather by how that influences their daily tasks negatively. Hypersomnia ^[3], or oversleeping, may not be talked about so often, but it is just as serious. Many also struggle with nightmares ^[4], which can turn the joy of sleep into a frightening ordeal. There are also other sleep disorders ^[5] that are worth learning about.

Reasons Behind Sleep Troubles

Although there are numerous factors that influence your sleep, nearly all of them can be grouped together, into two primary categories. First are the external factors [6], which include the environment you sleep in. However, nearly all sleep issues are caused by internal factors [7], which come from within your mind and body.

Coping Techniques

Now that you've learned about sleep, it is time to put that knowledge to practice [8], by combining specific techniques, with your personal needs. Napping [9], as silly as it may sound, plays a crucial role in getting a good night's sleep. One of the most effective ways to cope with a sleep disorder is by applying techniques from cognitive-behavioral therapy [10]. One of its basic approaches is to use stimulus control so that you learn to associate bedtime with something specific. A lot of times, sleep disorder are caused by dysfunctional thoughts [11], which we don't even realize we are having. Challenging those thoughts [12] is an excellent way not only to get more sleep but also to understand ourselves better and to feel less anxious. For this to happen, keeping a sleep journal [13] is a wonderful help. Practicing relaxation techniques [14] is, however, an absolute must, at least during your first attempts to cope with a sleep disorder. One of the most effectively and widely used relaxation techniques is called progressive muscle relaxation [15]. Another great approach to try is only to worry [16] at certain times [16] and prevent worries from ruining your sleep.

If you've been struggling with nightmares, one of the most productive approaches you can take, is engaged in nightmare exposure [17]. Gradually, you can take certain steps, to substitute nightmares [18] for pleasant imagery. Lastly, using the first sense we develop, as we are born - our sense of smell, [19] can have some unexpectedly positive results.

New Habits, New You

Habits are often what we blame for our difficulty to change one negative pattern or another. However, creating new habits [20] is easier than you might have thought, although it requires dedication, and will inevitably lead to a better rested you. There are some specific habits [21] that are extremely beneficial for healthy sleep. Furthermore, although sleep normally happens at night, your morning routine [22] predetermines a large portion of it.

What More Is There to Say?

Although quite a lot of people, globally, rely on sleep medication [23], before taking that step, you should be well-aware of all its aspects.

Now that you have learned so much about sleep, you may find it useful to self-assess your knowledge [24], so that you know what to stress upon and what to read again.

Finally, remember that you praise yourself for doing such a good job and that you can always come back [25] for motivation and inspiration.

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