

Yoga for Body *and* Mind

Guidance for Sleep Hygiene

We all probably know that sleep is essential. It is as important to our bodies as eating, drinking and breathing, and vital for maintaining good mental and physical health. Sleeping helps us to recover from physical as well as mental exertion.

We've all experienced a night of tossing and turning. When we don't get a good night of sleep, mood changes including increased irritability and anger can make it much harder to cope with even the minor stresses of daily life. Sleep deprivation can also lead to feelings of anxiety and can be a symptom of depression.

So, what can teens do to get a good night sleep? The Teen Yoga Ambassador groups recently discussed sleep hygiene as sleep patterns are often an issue for teens. They've put together guidance for good sleep hygiene.

Guidance for Good Sleep Hygiene

Here are some things teens can do for good sleep hygiene:

- * Keep your room clean and tidy
- * Try to keep the same time for going to bed and waking up. Your brain likes the same pattern
- * Take a shower or bath before bedtime
- * Drink a soothing herbal tea
- * Minimise phone use or screen time before winding down – the sleep hormone melatonin likes darkness
- * Practice a few yoga posture forms for calmness or the bedtime sequence on the Mood Cards
- * Read or listen to something inspirational
- * Avoid caffeine
- * Take time for a visualisation, a Nidra or a meditation
- * Be prepared for the next day by packing your bag, writing a list

- * Journal to help you release any worries and connect with yourself at the end of the day
- * Put some essential oils like lavender in your room
- * Consider your best sleeping position
- * Be aware of the best room temperature, covers on your bed. Good sleep is supported by a room which is quite cool
- * A dark room also favours good sleep
- * Find your own wind down routine for at least 20 minutes

It might also be helpful to have a plan that if you do wake up and are struggling to return to sleep, you have something to sooth yourself like writing in your journal, listening to calm music or something else. You may even need to get up and only return to bed if you are sleepy.

If you have a sleep disorder, you might need to speak with a doctor or medical professional about this.