

One Step at a Time

ADHD Next Steps for Parents and Teens

SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS FOR TEENS

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How to Use This Guide

- Read this with your teen if they are willing, but start with one or two changes rather than everything at once.
- Keep changes steady for a week before deciding whether they are helping.
- Aim for a realistic rhythm, not a perfect bedtime.
- Get extra support if sleep problems persist or mood, anxiety, medication or breathing seem to be part of the picture.

Remember: the goal is calmer nights, easier mornings and a pattern your teenager can actually keep going.

Sleep Hygiene Tips for Teens

Why Sleep Matters

During puberty, many teenagers naturally feel sleepy later at night and find it harder to fall asleep early. Even so, most teens still need around 8 to 10 hours of sleep on a regular basis, and too little sleep can affect attention, learning, mood, energy and safety.

- Better attention and concentration** for school, revision and everyday tasks
- More stable mood** and less emotional fragility when things go wrong
- Improved learning and memory** because the brain uses sleep to process information
- More energy** for sport, friendships and ordinary daily life
- Safer decision-making** especially for older teens who are travelling independently or learning to drive

A useful mindset

A later body clock is common in teenagers, so this is not about blame.

The goal is to reduce what keeps the brain switched on at night and build a pattern the body can trust.

The Biggest Habits That Help

Sleep Hygiene Checklist: Part 1

Start with the habits most likely to make the biggest difference first.

- Keep wake-up time as consistent as possible** even at weekends, so the body clock does not drift too far later

- Build a 30 to 60 minute wind-down** with calmer, lower-stimulation activities before bed

- Dim lights and reduce screens in the last part of the evening** because bright light and device use can keep the brain alert

- Keep the bedroom cool, dark, quiet and comfortable** so the room supports sleep rather than wakefulness

One helpful rule

Morning time usually matters more than bedtime.

A steady wake-up time often does more to reset sleep than trying to force an unrealistically early bedtime.

The Biggest Habits That Help

Sleep Hygiene Checklist: Part 2

These habits support the body clock and make it easier for sleep to come naturally.

- Avoid caffeine after lunch** especially coffee, strong tea, cola and energy drinks

- Get daylight and movement during the day** ideally with some morning light to help reset the body clock

- Keep the bed for sleep** rather than homework, gaming, scrolling or hanging out for long periods

- If a nap is needed, keep it short and earlier** so it does not steal sleep from the night

Start small

- Choose one or two changes first.
- Keep them going for a week.
- Notice what helps rather than expecting instant perfection.

A Gentle Evening Routine

A Simple Wind-Down Plan

Not every teenager will want the same routine. The key is lowering stimulation and repeating the same broad pattern most nights.

- 1. About 60 minutes before bed** dim lights where possible, reduce homework or gaming if you can, and put the phone on charge away from the bed or on do not disturb.
- 2. About 30 minutes before bed** shower, wash, brush teeth, lay out clothes for tomorrow, and get a drink of water.
- 3. About 15 minutes before bed** choose something low-key such as a paper book, audiobook, stretching, sketching, calm music or slow breathing.
- 4. At bedtime** lights out at roughly the same time on most nights, without long negotiations or trying to force sleep.

Common sleep traps

- Long lie-ins to catch up can push bedtime later again the next night.
- Energy drinks or caffeine in the afternoon and evening can stay in the body for hours.
- Homework, TV or scrolling in bed can teach the brain that bed is for being awake.
- Bright lights, intense exercise or arguments right before bed can make it harder to switch off.

When Sleep Still Isn't Settling

When to get extra help

- Sleep is difficult most nights for several weeks and simple changes are not making enough difference.
- Your teen snores loudly, gasps, stops breathing, sleepwalks a lot, or seems extremely sleepy in the daytime.
- Anxiety, panic, low mood, nightmares, self-harm thoughts or school stress are getting in the way of sleep.
- You think medication, including ADHD medication, may be affecting sleep and you need to speak to the prescriber or GP.
- An older teen is driving or learning to drive and is regularly tired enough to feel drowsy.

What Parents Can Do

When sleep is hard, it is easy for bedtime to become a battleground. A calmer, more matter-of-fact approach usually works better.

- Keep mornings steadier than bedtimes** where possible, because this helps the body clock more.
- Stay calm and low-drama** even when your teen is grumpy, worried or tired.
- Notice the pattern** including anxiety, pain, medication timing, breathing issues, screens or weekend drift.
- Think support, not punishment** because shame and conflict tend to make sleep harder rather than easier.

This Week's Sleep Reset Plan

Quick Plan + Mini Tracker

Use this page to choose a small starting point and keep an eye on what seems to help.

The main sleep difficulty right now is:

The two changes we are going to try this week are:

What will help mornings stay more consistent?

Day	Wake time	Screens off	Bedtime	How it went
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Based on current sleep guidance from NHS resources, the CDC, and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.