SLEEP ON IT

SLEEP AND MEMORY

THE HOPEFULL INSTITUTE



Sleep is when your brain saves what you learned today. Skip it, and some of today's work is lost.

WHY IT WORKS

During the day your brain collects new information. At night, while you sleep, it sorts that information and stores it so you can find it again later. It works a lot like pressing save on an assignment.

Say you study the causes of World War I until midnight and then get five hours of sleep. Your brain has less time to save what you studied, and you walk into the test tired, slow and easily distracted. Stopping at 10pm and sleeping eight hours usually gets you a better mark.

In one study, people who missed a night of sleep were about 40 per cent worse at forming new memories the next day than people who slept normally.

HOW TO DO IT TONIGHT

1. Aim for 8 to 10 hours. Count back from your wake-up time to set your bedtime.
2. Stop studying 30 minutes before bed, and do one quick self-test on the most important idea.
3. Charge your phone outside your bedroom, or at least on the other side of the room.
4. Keep the same bedtime on school nights, even in exam weeks.

WAYS TO SLEEP BETTER

Set a bedtime alarm
Use an alarm that tells you when to get ready for bed, not just when to wake up.

Screens off early
Scrolling keeps your brain switched on. Put the screen away 30 minutes before bed.

Cut caffeine after lunch
Energy drinks and coffee can stay in your system for hours.

Dark, cool and quiet
Close the blinds, let some fresh air in and turn off notifications.

Get morning light
Ten minutes outside in the morning helps you feel sleepy at night.

Write it down
If your head is racing, jot down tomorrow's to-do list so your brain can let go.

TRY THIS

Tonight, set a **bedtime alarm nine hours before you need to wake up.** When it goes off, finish up, put your phone on charge outside your room and start winding down.

The research: Yoo, S., Hu, P. T., Gujar, N., Jolesz, F. A. and Walker, M. P. (2007). A deficit in the ability to form new human memories without sleep. *Nature Neuroscience*, volume 10, pages 385 to 392.