



GOOD PRACTICES FOR SLEEP AND REST

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Risk Prevention Department

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GOOD PRACTICES FOR SLEEP AND REST

- In the work environment, **be assertive and learn to say no when the workload requires it.** Organise your time and agenda and be tidy:
 - Schedule activities well in advance and plan your time.
 - Do not take on more tasks or obligations than you can really take responsibility for.
 - Distinguish what is important from what is not so important, prioritising the former. Try not to fixate on everything that has to be done, so as to avoid needless worrying.
 - Stop and rest when you need to, a few minutes is enough. If the pressure rises, it may be a good idea to take a walk to freshen up.
 - Know how to delegate. Count on the help of colleagues. You are not alone.
 - Try to keep to timetables and avoid marathon working hours to facilitate a work-life balance.
 - Maintain a cordial relationship with the rest of the staff, paying attention to emotional communication. Count to ten before responding during moments of heightened tension.
- **Dedicate at least 30 minutes a day to activities that you enjoy.** Some examples: going for a walk or playing sports, reading your favourite books, doing artistic activities, spending time with family and friends, etc.
- **Limit the duration of naps,** which should be short, even though they provide energy (maximum 20 minutes). Short naps can be healthy and improve alertness and performance after eating, without compromising night-time sleep.



- **Avoid intense exercise in the evening or at night**, which can be replaced by gentle exercise to relieve accumulated stress and tension. Sport, especially if it is intense, should be played at least 2 or 3 hours before bedtime.
- **Avoid eating too much dinner and going to bed in the middle of digestion.** This generally means not going to bed until at least 2 hours after dinner. Try to eat light meals to help you fall asleep.
- **Avoid alcohol, tobacco and foods or drinks containing caffeine** or other stimulants a few hours before bedtime.
- **Practice yoga, meditation or other activities that allow you to relax**, take your mind off your problems and focus on the moment. Conscious breathing helps to achieve serenity that will result in a good rest.
- **Hot showers (or baths).** Washing yourself with hot water at a temperature of about 40 degrees before going to bed is associated with an improvement in the quality of sleep, thanks to its relaxing effect.
- **Maintain routine bedtimes and wake-up times** that keep your internal clock synchronised with your rhythm of life. It's important to be able to go to sleep when you are sleepy.
- **Establish regular sleep schedules** with a maximum difference of 2 hours between workdays and holidays.
- **Follow a quiet routine before going to bed** that helps you disconnect little by little, such as reading a book or listening to music, in preparation for rest.



- **Use the bed for sleeping and/or for relationships, not for working or eating.** The bedroom cannot be an extension of the office or a dining room. Working on the bed with mobiles and laptops confuses the brain, which needs to associate the bed and its environment with actions that allow us to rest and sleep.
- **Have a comfortable and tidy bedroom.** Control the entry of light, noise (including visual noise) and temperature, if it's possible, with an optimum temperature of between 18 and 19°C. Light and noise are elements that the brain associates with wakefulness, so we must isolate ourselves from them. Invest in a comfortable mattress.
- **Avoid using electronic devices like TVs, laptops or mobile phones before going to bed,** ensuring that electronic devices with blue light emissions are switched off well before your usual sleep time. While sleeping, mobile phones should be turned off or put on aeroplane mode.
- **In the event of occasional episodes of insomnia, avoid getting nervous** and obsessing about the clock and the time remaining until the alarm clock goes off, as this will cause anxiety. Try to be patient and not worry too much.
- **If you can't sleep, leave the bedroom and do something relaxing until you get back to sleep.** If worries are keeping you awake, write down what's troubling you with a pen and paper, which you can leave on the bedside table.
- **If the problem persists** (>15 days) consult a health professional. Do not self-medicate.



Recommendations are included to prevent certain practices from negatively impacting attention while driving (Table 1) as well as recommendations from the International Sleep Association to reduce the effects of night work (Table 2), both of which are critical for rest.

Table 1. Recommendations to prevent falling asleep at the wheel

- Avoid long journeys, especially if they are unusual or at night.
- Pause at least 20-30 minutes driving every 2 hours or every 200 km.
- Maintain an active driving posture by holding the steering wheel firmly.
- Adequately ventilate the interior of the vehicle, directing some of the air vents towards the body or arms, but not directly towards the eyes.
- Try not to listen to relaxing music at times when drowsiness is more likely to occur. Maintain a calm and pleasant conversation when accompanied.
- Before getting on the road do not eat large meals or drink alcohol.
- Rest before driving if you have done any strenuous and tiring activity.
- The effects of sleepiness are influenced by age and tend to be more intense at older ages.



Table 2. Recommendations for night work

- Exposure to about 45 minutes of white light (between 1,000-10,000 lux) before going to work.
- Use naps as a measure to reduce fatigue and improve work performance and safety during periods of night. If napping makes it difficult to fall asleep, shortening or fragmenting sleep, it is best to avoid it.
- Maintain a regular meal schedule and avoid large meals at night.
- Have a stimulating drink at the beginning of the evening (e.g. 1 coffee) but do not overdo it during the rest of the shift.
- Avoid exposure to bright light in the morning (wear sunglasses) when returning from work, before going to bed.
- Take melatonin (under medical supervision) at bedtime in the morning after returning from a night shift.
- Avoid drinking liquids before going to bed as this may disturb continuous sleep. It is advisable to control fluid intake about 2 hours before bedtime as drinking before bedtime can disrupt sleep, due to the need to urinate.
- Follow the routines of switching off and relaxing when you get home in the morning (light meals, shower, dim light, etc.).
- Improve the environment and the conditions of the room during the sleep period (suitable silence, darkness and temperature). Help yourself with the use of an eye mask, earplugs, disconnecting the telephone, etc.



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