

Sleep Well Toolkit

Fall 2023

McDonald Center for
Student Well-Being



Sleep Well
Do Well
Be Well

When we are able to sleep well, we can do well and be well. While it's fairly intuitive that sleep is important, getting good, restful sleep can be a challenge that many struggle with. This guided workbook is designed to provide you with ample opportunity to think through your sleep habits from many different angles and create individualized goals based on your needs and intentions.

Sleep is very individual, and can be impacted by so many things. You are invited to use whichever pages of this guide suit you best as a starting point to improve your own sleep.

Sleep
FOR SUCCESS



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Why Does Sleep Matter?

There are many reasons why getting enough sleep is important. For example, sleeping well:

1

Supports mental health

4

Supports immune system function

3

Reduces risk of long term health consequences

2

Supports learning and memory

5

Reduces risk of accidents and injuries

There are many theories as to why we sleep and researchers continue to study what exactly happens while sleeping, but anyone who is short on sleep instinctively knows how important it is to their ability to live well and flourish. It is easy to underestimate, however, just how costly sleep deprivation can be to well-being, and it can be easy to become accustomed to existing in a sleep-deprived state.

Journal Prompt:

What are some consequences of sleep deprivation that I have experienced?

How Sleepy Are You?

EPWORTH SLEEPINESS SCALE

How likely are you to doze off or fall asleep in the following situations, in contrast to feeling just tired? This refers to your usual way of life in recent times. Even if you haven't done some of these things recently, try to consider how they would have affected you.

Use the following scale to choose the most appropriate number for each situation:

0 = would NEVER doze

1 = SLIGHT CHANCE of dozing

2 = MODERATE CHANCE of dozing

3 = HIGH CHANCE of dozing

Situation	Chance of Dozing
Sitting and reading	
Watching TV	
Sitting, inactive in a public place (e.g. a theatre or meeting)	
As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break	
Lying down to rest in the afternoon when circumstances permit	
Sitting and talking to someone	
Sitting quietly after a lunch without alcohol	
In a car, while stopped for a few minutes in traffic	

How Sleepy Are You?

SCORING THE EPWORTH SLEEPINESS SCALE

Add up the total score from the previous page and compare it to the scale below. There are many indicators that can help you better understand how sleepy you are and what that means for you, and the Epworth Scale is just one. Check in with yourself - what are other ways you know when you're short on sleep?

0-5 Lower Normal Daytime Sleepiness

6-10 Higher Normal Daytime Sleepiness

11-12 Mild Excessive Daytime Sleepiness

13-15 Moderate Excessive Daytime Sleepiness

16-24 Severe Excessive Daytime Sleepiness

Journal Prompts:

What was your score? Was it surprising or not? What are other ways you know you're overly sleepy?

What do you do and how do you respond when you're tired?

Sleep Goals

Understanding how sleepy you are can help you to begin thinking about how much sleep you need to function at your highest potential. Many experts recommend 7-9 hours a night, but each body is different. If you're considering trying to get additional sleep, what are some goals that could guide changes in your life?

Journal Prompts:

When do I feel most sleepy? What kinds of events impact my sleep the most?

When do I feel most rested? What kinds of events lead to sleeping well? How many hours of sleep help me feel most rested?

What are my goals around sleep for the coming week? Month? Semester?



The following pages are designed to support you as you consider ways to improve your sleep and meet the goals you set on the previous page. Choose the topics that make the most sense given your goals, and use the sleep tracker pages to monitor impact and progress.

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Check Your Environment

While it may seem obvious, your environment can play a significant role in your ability to fall asleep, stay asleep, and sleep well. Take an inventory of your sleep environment and check if the following aspects are present or not:

- ✓ dark
- ✓ cool
- ✓ quiet
- ✓ cozy
- ✓ stress free

While we don't always have full control over our environment, especially when living with roommates or family members, there are ways to adjust these environmental aspects to impact your sleep in positive ways. Create an individualized plan for yourself below:

Environment for Rest	Your Plan
Create more darkness (e.g. curtains, sleep mask, lighting changes)	
Create more cozy (e.g. comfy pillows, blankets, calming views)	
Create more quiet (e.g. white noise, ear plugs, roommate schedule)	
Adjust temperature (e.g. different sleepwear, blankets, thermostat)	
Reduce stress (e.g. reduce homework in bed, remove stimuli)	

Check Your Schedule

Though sometimes hard to influence, your schedule can play a significant role in your ability to create consistent sleep and wake patterns. Take an inventory of your daily schedule and check if the following aspects are present or not:



time for short naps



time for bedtime routine



few early morning events



few late night events

While we don't always have full control over our schedule, especially when living with others and while having to navigate the challenges of college life, there are ways to make adjustments that can impact your sleep in positive easy ways. What changes or plans might you make to impact your schedule in positive ways for healthy sleep?

Scheduling Sleep

Time for short (20 min or 90 min) naps earlier in day

Reduce or eliminate early morning events (as much as possible)

Reduce or eliminate late evening events

Include scheduled time for wind down and bedtime routine

Prioritize sleep over other tasks and events

Your Plan

Check Your Intake

Sometimes what we consume near to bedtime or right before bed can impact sleep. If your body needs to digest a heavy meal, it can negatively affect sleep. And while it's fairly intuitive that caffeine can interrupt sleep, less well known is the fact that though alcohol may cause drowsy feelings, alcohol use actually interferes with deep, restful, and restorative sleep cycles.



reduce or eliminate alcohol



light snack



decaffeinated beverages near bedtime

Over the next week or two, check in with yourself about how these factors (if they apply to your choices) may be impacting your sleep:

Food / Drink	Impact on Your Sleep
Heavy or late-night meals	
Alcohol use (note time of day consumed)	
Caffeinated drinks (note time of day consumed)	
Light bedtime snack (protein + carb tend to be effective for many)	
Decaffeinated beverages near bedtime	

Check Your Tech Use

Technology and social media, while useful in many ways, have also been demonstrated to have an impact on our bodies, health, mental health, and sleep. There are ways to mitigate the negative effects:

- ✓ phone away
- ✓ do not disturb settings
- ✓ dark mode
- ✓ non-phone alarm clock
- ✓ screen free bedtime routine

Check your tech use, especially as you approach bedtime. It can be helpful to turn screens off 30-60 minutes before sleep. What other changes might you consider?

Tech Use Changes	Your Plan
Place phone away from bed during bedtime routine and sleep time	
Use dark mode settings during evening hours	
Use do not disturb settings during bedtime routine and sleep time	
Use an alarm clock that is separate from your phone	
Create a screen-free wind down or bedtime routine	

Tech Use & Sleep

Most of us are familiar with the impact that artificial and blue light can have on our ability to fall asleep and sleep well. But tech use can also impact your sleep in other ways. Take a few minutes to check in with yourself about how the type of content you consume may be impacting your sleep.

Journal Prompts:

When do I use social media the most? How does it impact my day?

What kinds of content do I consume the most? How do I feel after?

How does the content I consume impact my sleep? Are there changes I want to make or goals I want to aim for?

Check Your Mental Health

There are many ways that stress and mental health can impact sleep. Whether your mind is racing with anxious thoughts, your body is wired from a stressful day, you're feeling lonely or disconnected from important people in your life, or any number of other challenges of college life, there are ways to care for your mental health while also focusing on getting more and better sleep. And, of course, getting better sleep can, in turn, support your mental health.

- ✓ meditation
- ✓ journaling
- ✓ counseling
- ✓ prayer
- ✓ calming bedtime routine

What are some strategies you might try out to calm your mind and body for sleep?

Calming Strategy	Your Plan
Meditation or prayer (Calm or Hallow app)	
Journaling	
Connecting with loved ones more intentionally	
Creating a calming bedtime routine	
Seeking counseling	

Check Your Body

Our bodies play a significant role in sleep, and we can support that role by caring for them throughout the day. Creating an exercise plan to move your body during the day (and not too close to bedtime), as well as integrating calming stretching or other activities near bedtime can support good sleep. By working with natural circadian rhythms, you can train your body to know when it is time to rest by creating a familiar bedtime routine and sticking to consistent sleep and wake times. If you have a rough night's sleep and need a daytime nap, stick to short naps (20 or 90 minutes) and keep them earlier in the day so they don't interfere with the next night's sleep.



workout routine



bedtime routine



short naps



calming activities at bedtime



consistent sleep/wake times

What are ways you can support your body for restful sleep?

Supportive Strategy	Your Plan
Regular workout routine (not too close to bedtime)	
Calming bedtime practices such as stretching, yoga, or deep breathing	
Creating a calming and repeatable bedtime routine	
If needed, utilizing short naps during daytime hours	
Maintaining consistent sleep and wake times	

How to nap

Sleep researchers and experts consistently suggest that daytime naps be short - either 20 minutes or 90 minutes in length. Why is that? When we fall asleep, our bodies go through multiple sleep cycles throughout the night, each lasting about 90 minutes. If you've ever woken up groggy, it's likely because you woke during the middle of a sleep cycle. A 20 minute power nap allows you to experience some benefits of light sleep without entering into the full 90 minute cycle. While daytime naps can be helpful in reducing sleepiness, they can not fully replace deep, restorative nighttime sleep. As your body moves through cumulative sleep cycles in the night, it moves into and out of deeper and more restorative sleep stages. While it can be helpful, a shorter daytime nap doesn't provide the same restoration as good nighttime sleep. If you find yourself needing lots of naps to get by, revisit your nighttime sleep routines.



20 or 90 minutes



daytime hours



supplemental sleep

Journal Prompts:

Do you nap? Why or why not? Would daytime naps be helpful for you?

What length of nap is most helpful to your body? How do you know?

Check Your Symptoms

While we all struggle with sleep from time to time, consistent sleep struggles are worth getting checked out. If your lack of sleep is impacting your daily activities, or you're experiencing symptoms below, schedule an appointment with your doctor or University Health Services to discuss further options with a medical professional.

- ✓ difficulty falling asleep
- ✓ difficulty staying asleep
- ✓ waking often or early
- ✓ daytime sleepiness
- ✓ not feeling rested after sleep
- ✓ impacts on cognition

What symptoms have you experienced? How do they impact your daily activities?

Symptoms	Impact on Daily Activities
Difficulty falling or staying asleep	
Waking often or too early	
Excessive daytime sleepiness	
Not feeling rested after full night's sleep	
Difficulty with focus, concentration, or memory	

Review Sleep Goals

Take a moment to review the previous pages of worksheets and journal prompts. Write down and prioritize your sleep goals for the coming weeks, then use the following pages to finalize your goals, track your habit changes, and notice the impacts on your sleep.

Journal Prompts:

What are all of the potential changes to my sleep habits that I've explored?

What are the top 2-3 goals for sleep that I have?

Based on my goals, which habit changes will likely be most effective?

My Sleep Plan

Write down your goals and sleep plan on this page and keep it in a visible place so you can revisit your goals throughout the coming weeks. Changes to sleep habits can take time, and reminding yourself of your goals can support your long term success.

Why am I trying to make changes to my sleep habits?

Sleep Goal #1

Sleep Goal #2

Sleep Goal #3

Habit Change #1

Habit Change #2

Habit Change #3

Sleep Tracker

While some sleep adjustments may offer immediate benefits, it can sometimes take time to see the progress and impact of adjustments. There are so many factors that can impact sleep, it can be useful to track them over time. Use the following sleep tracker to follow your progress.

WEEK ONE

Night	Stress Level	Habit Change	Bed-time	Wake Up Time	Total Hours	How do you feel?
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

Sleep Tracker

While some sleep adjustments may offer immediate benefits, it can sometimes take time to see the progress and impact of adjustments. There are so many factors that can impact sleep, it can be useful to track them over time. Use the following sleep trackers to follow your progress.

WEEK TWO

Night	Stress Level	Habit Change	Bed-time	Wake Up Time	Total Hours	How do you feel?
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

Sleep Tracker

While some sleep adjustments may offer immediate benefits, it can sometimes take time to see the progress and impact of adjustments. There are so many factors that can impact sleep, it can be useful to track them over time. Use the following sleep trackers to follow your progress.

WEEK THREE

Night	Stress Level	Habit Change	Bed-time	Wake Up Time	Total Hours	How do you feel?
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

Sleep Tracker

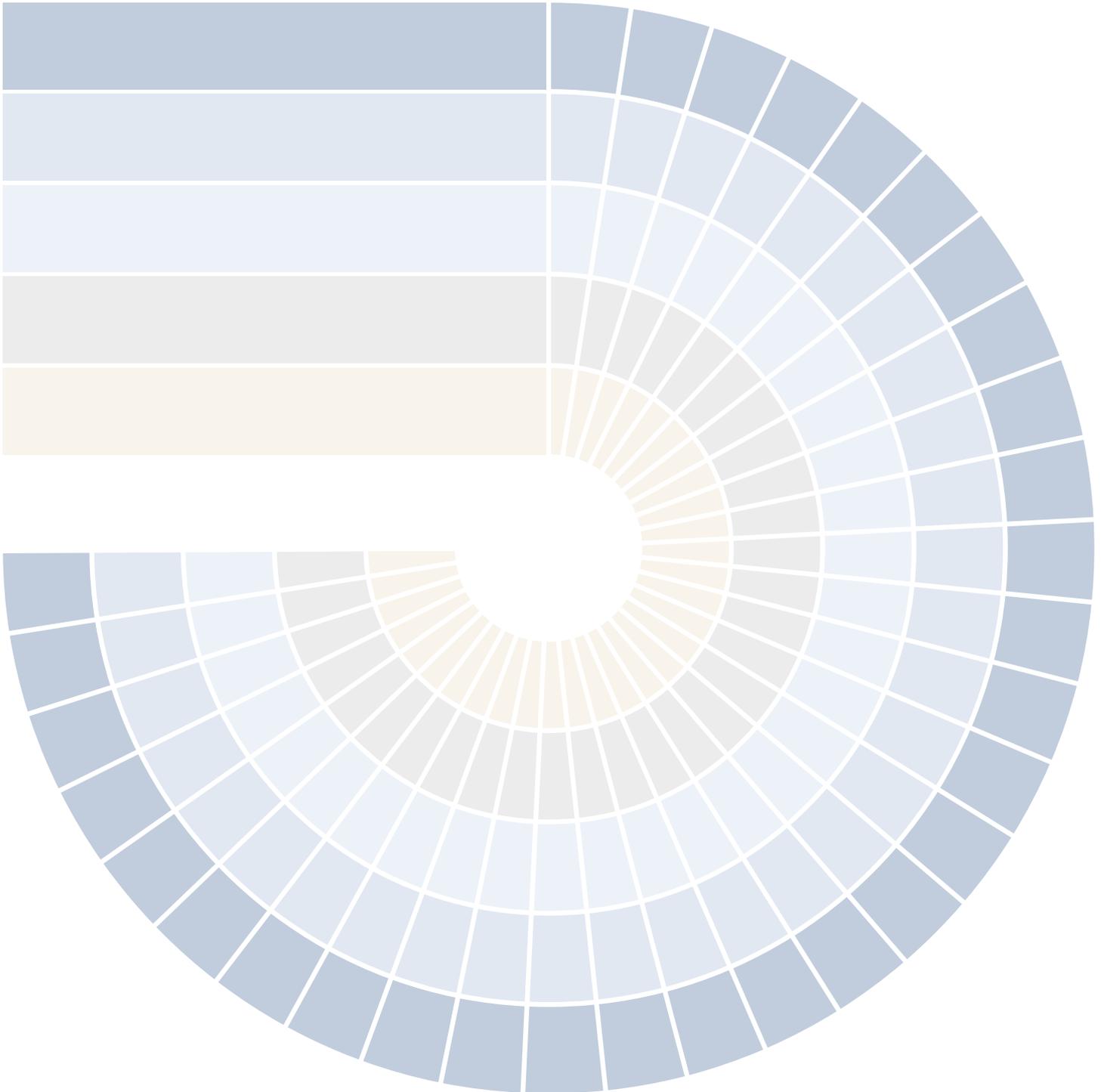
While some sleep adjustments may offer immediate benefits, it can sometimes take time to see the progress and impact of adjustments. There are so many factors that can impact sleep, it can be useful to track them over time. Use the following sleep trackers to follow your progress.

WEEK FOUR

Night	Stress Level	Habit Change	Bed-time	Wake Up Time	Total Hours	How do you feel?
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

Monthly Habit Tracker

Use the monthly habit tracker below to track longer term changes around your sleep.

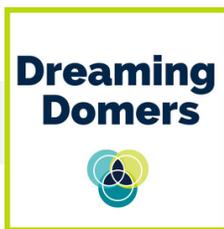


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For further information or support:

McDonald Center for Student Well-Being
University Health Services
University Counseling Center
Center for Student Support and Care

mcwell.nd.edu
uhs.nd.edu
ucc.nd.edu
supportandcare.nd.edu



Or consider
participating in the
Dreaming Domers
Sleep Program



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