



David Fairlamb THE FIT FACTOR

FITNESS TIP

The feelgood factor associated with exercise helps lower stress and anxiety levels, improving your quality of sleep.

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Try to build time to wind down at the end of each day, which does not involve any screens or social media interaction. This will help you relax and improve your quality of sleep.

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THE number of children admitted to hospital with sleeping disorders has risen dramatically over the last six years.

A combination of rising obesity levels, excessive use of social media before bed and an increased level of mental health issues are seen as the main factors.

NHS statistics revealed nearly 10,000 under 16s visited hospital for sleep disorders last year.

This has become a big problem and a hidden health issue. Many more children seem to be suffering from anxiety (a nervous reaction to events causing excessive uneasiness and apprehension) due to school and peer pressure but much blame surely lies with social media.

This new era of social media where children seem to be glued to their phones was always going to have an impact on health at some point.

What can you do to improve your child and indeed your own sleeping patterns?

A good sleep routine is key in supporting a better sleep pattern. Sleeping early evening for an hour or going to bed late and up early can completely knock your body clock.

If your body is out of routine, tiredness and feeling lethargic become the norm

often at the wrong times of the day.

Diet can play a big role too. Children and adults who are consuming a lot of sugar can lead to a double negative impact:

1 Drinking energy and sugary drinks at night to stay awake. This in many cases is to keep up to date with social media or to play on video games.

2 The next day this trend often continues in order to compensate for the lack of sleep.

This double intake of sugar plus energy drinks and lack of sleep means you are more likely to be obese and score higher on several other risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high blood pressure and poor glucose metabolism. Research shows those who sleep longer and better tend to have less fat around their waist, lower blood pressure and higher levels of good cholesterol.

Long term consistency conquers short term intensity

Motivational quote of the day

If you are looking for ways to improve your family's sleep patterns and of course health, remove all sugary and energy drinks from their diet.

The brain stimulation associated with social media and digital devices is a major cause of sleeping issues.

Building in winding down time at the end of each day and reducing smart phone use at least an hour before bedtime can be hugely beneficial towards a good night's sleep. You cannot blame social media companies if children are staying up late at night on screens and social networks - parents must look to take more responsibility and have stricter house rules. Consistency is the key to success and therefore these habits need to stick.

The benefits of exercise in all aspects of life are huge and that includes improving your sleep. There's a substantial body of scientific evidence that proves exercise helps improves sleep. Making exercise part of your regular routine can contribute to a healthier and more restful sleep.

Adopting strict rules for your children at an early age can significantly improve their sleep patterns and therefore improve physical and mental health moving forward.



> Isn't it time that that phone was put away for the night?