

THIS WAY UP ↑↑

Helping You Take Care of Your Mental Health

Guide for Getting Good Sleep in Self-Isolation






A guide to help with

Getting Good Sleep in Self-Isolation

You've had a bath, you've read your book, and you haven't looked at your phone for the past hour. But you still can't sleep...




Self-isolation can be challenging in many ways, including its effect on sleep. This impact can be quite unique from other times you may have struggled with sleep in the past, and some of the normal tips and tricks may no longer work to get you back on track.

It's normal for your sleep to be disrupted when you are feeling sick and you may need to rest and sleep more than usual. This is part of recovery and sleep typically returns to normal once you are well again.

This document is intended for people who are in isolation who are well.

Why is my sleep impacted now that I'm in isolation?



One of the most important factors in getting a good sleep is routine, and doing things at similar times each day.

Self-isolation causes a "rupture" in your usual routines, often forcing you to stop going to work, travelling between places, and participating in outdoor activities like exercise that would normally help you structure your day. This can throw the whole day off, and cause a change in the timing of your other daily activities, like the time you feel like waking up in the morning, when you eat your meals, and when you feel tired enough to go to sleep at night.

THIS WAY UP ↑↑



CRUFAD

Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety & Depression



A guide to help with

Getting Good Sleep in Self-Isolation



A second important factor in getting good sleep is **daylight**.

Self-isolation means not visiting as many places as you used to, and not getting exposed to as much daylight as when you were out and about. This can all affect your sleep, because daylight helps you control the hormone in your body (called melatonin) which keeps your sleep and wake patterns in check. Without enough daylight, your melatonin levels can get out of rhythm, making it hard for your body to know when you should be tired enough to go to sleep, and alert enough to stay awake.



What can I do to help get good sleep in isolation?



Check out our 6 top tips below for how to get a good sleep in self-isolation. Please note these tips are intended for people who are in isolation who are well.



1

Get up at the same time every morning, and try to go to bed at the same time you usually do. If you sleep in, this will affect how easily you fall asleep the next night, which can become a vicious cycle.

2

Try not to nap during the day, to make sure that you are tired at bed time. Instead, drink a big glass of water, take a few deep breaths, and try some slow and gentle movements to re-energize your body.



THIS WAY UP ↑↑



What can I do to help get good sleep in isolation?



3

Expose yourself to daylight several times a day. If you have a garden or balcony, try and get outside in the sun, particularly in the morning. Exercising, working or eating meals by a window are flexible ways of exposing yourself to sunlight. Try to get fresh air and sunlight as a household by combining this with a joint activity, such as a board game.

4

Schedule regular exercise each day, including exercising at a similar time to help create a routine (for example, just before lunch each day). Don't exercise too close to bed time as this can keep you awake. There are plenty of ways you can exercise while in self-isolation, which you can learn about in our [Keeping Active Through Self-Isolation Guide](#).

5

Have a short and relaxing evening routine (including things such as washing your face and listening to a podcast) to help you to wind down. Even if you don't fall asleep immediately after this evening routine, doing this each night can help get you in the 'mood' for sleep and will start to take effect over time.

6

Isolating with children? Routines help children feel safe and secure. Try to keep a morning and bedtime routine as close to normal as possible. For tips on keeping a routine with children, check out [Raising Children Network](#).

THIS WAY UP ↑↑





To access additional tools for coping with stress and anxiety during COVID-19, please visit our website.

<https://thiswayup.org.au/covid-19/>



UNSW



ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
SYDNEY

Warning: This guidance is intended for people in self-isolation without any symptoms or diagnosis of acute respiratory illness. It should not replace medical guidance in case of any health condition.