how to manage

sleep and gaming

for a healthy headspace

Sleep is important for our physical and mental health. Although it varies from person to person, if you're aged between 12–17 years, you should be aiming for 8 to 10 hours sleep per night and 18–25 year olds should try to get 7 to 9 hours.

Gaming and internet use can be a positive and enjoyable pastime. It can connect us with others, help us feel more socially included and improve our self-esteem. Healthy gaming can bring structure and routine into our lives as well as provide some beneficial downtime, relaxation and fun, which is all good for our mental health.

However for some people, gaming and screen time can get in the way of having a good night's sleep, which can lead to other problems.

what happens if we don't get enough sleep?

Trouble sleeping sets the stage for many problems. When we are not getting enough sleep it is harder to manage the stress in our lives, to keep anxiety in check and it can impact our mood. We will have less energy, be more irritable and even have poorer physical health.

Sleep gives us time for our brain to process all that we have done and learned during the day, so it's important for our development and concentration too.

If you are online when you would normally be sleeping, it may be time to start reducing your screen use. Not only does too much screen time take away precious sleep, but using technology before bedtime makes it harder to fall asleep, and can also reduce the quality of sleep, which can make us feel sleepier the next day.

Looking at screens before bedtime has a stimulating effect on our minds, because of the light reflecting from the device, (often a blue coloured light). It can encourage our minds to stay alert, which can interrupt our natural body clocks and make it harder to fall asleep.

supporting yourself and where to get help

Good sleep habits take consistent practice. It can be tough when your sleep isn't great to get back on track, but there are things you can do to enjoy gaming and continue to get a good night's sleep, don't be disheartened if it takes a while it's worth keeping at it.

Turn of video games, screens and social media at least one hour before you go to bed. Set a bedtime for your device! Maybe have a bath, watch a movie, or read a book instead. Try a mindfulness exercise if you are having trouble winding down.

Lower the brightness on your phone and computer screens at night. Some phones have a night mode which is one way to do this.

Don't charge your devices in your room overnight. It can be tempting to keep playing when we should be asleep. Use an old fashioned alarm clock instead of your smart phone.

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