



## Healthy sleep for adults

It is a well-known fact that young babies make parents very tired- and no amount of clever strategies will change this. However there's a difference between feeling tired, wishing you'd had a bit more sleep and real exhaustion.

It is helpful if you can sleep when the baby sleeps. You may feel like you can't - but even if you develop a routine of lying down with eyes closed and just resting for an hour as they sleep you will experience some refreshment. It's tempting to spend this time cleaning up and cooking etc. but you need to catch up on your rest if your baby is waking as most do at night. Talk to your partner about how much sleep you both need and when it's most useful for you. One person may really value a sleep in on Sundays and another may like a nap before dinner.

*“On Friday and Saturday nights my partner would get up between 10 pm and 3 am to the baby and I would do after 3am. I would get up with the baby and go out for coffee and he slept in. That meant I could go to bed at 9 and sleep for 6 hours straight- bliss! We only did this for a few months but it got us through.”*

– Mai 27

Here are some tips to prevent sleep issues becoming problems:

- » Don't look at the clock too often. You can turn your clock around so you are not staring at the time and compulsively counting how much sleep you have had.
- » Have a hot shower and a cup of tea or a similar wind down routine before you sleep.
- » Sleep in a well-ventilated room that is not too hot.
- » Have the room as dark as possible.
- » Consider moving your baby a little further away if their snuffling's and movements keep you awake.
- » Avoid caffeine after midday if it affects your sleep.
- » Exercise during the day so your muscles appreciate a rest. Sitting on a couch all day makes it very hard to fall asleep comfortably at night.
- » Think about positive, optimistic things, don't ruminate on dark thoughts in bed as anxiety can lessen our sleep hygiene.
- » Avoid sharing the bed with your baby.
- » Read a peaceful pleasant book for ten minutes before you turn out the light rather than using screens which can keep us awake.

If you regularly fall asleep during the day unexpectedly or fall asleep as soon as your head hits the pillow at night you do probably need more sleep. So try some of the techniques to catch up a bit. If you can't sleep when you have an opportunity to you may have a sleep problem. See your GP about more serious sleep problems that crop up. There are many new treatments these days and you can experience a real improvement in mood as a result.