GOODNIGHT COMM AVE

A Bedtime Companion for College Students
This booklet is about healthy sleep habits. These tips can be used in college and beyond.

Make a plan for getting a good night sleep.

☐ Check off the sleep strategies you will use!

In a BU dorm room, there was a laptop and an iPhone and a view of the Citgo sign shining beneath the moon...
Goodnight Facebook, goodnight homework...

What’s the big deal about sleep?

When you get enough sleep each night, you...

**Study smarter.**
Sleep sharpens concentration, solidifies memory, and improves brain performance. Students who get the recommended 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night do better academically.

**Boost your mood.**
Sleep restores the body and helps manage stress, irritability, and feelings of depression and anxiety.

**Battle germs.**
Sleep improves the body's ability to fight off colds, flu, and other illnesses.

**Avoid weight gain.**
Lack of sleep weakens communication between your brain and stomach, making you more likely to overeat.

**Stay awake!**
More sleep = less daytime sleepiness (no more snoozing through class!)

Sleep is a big deal because it enhances overall physical and emotional health.
Tips for Getting a Good Night Sleep

**Put your thoughts to bed.**

Make a to-do list for the next day before going to bed. Doing this can quiet your thoughts and prepare you for a peaceful night’s sleep. Keep a notepad by your bed to write down things you need to do or remember. Simply jotting things down can relax your mind!

- Make tomorrow’s to-do list before bed
- Keep a bedside notepad to write down any thoughts or worries

**Snack lightly.**

Light snacks before bedtime are OK, but avoid heavy meals (i.e. Late Nite) since digestion prevents the body from relaxing. Pretzels, fruit, and yogurt are all good options. Warm milk, bananas, and other foods high in tryptophan stimulate serotonin in the brain and can help with sleep. Avoid alcohol consumption before bedtime as it will interfere with normal sleep patterns.

- Stick to healthy snacks like fruit or yogurt before bed

**Consider your caffeine intake.**

Drinking too much coffee during the day can affect sleep patterns at night. Try to avoid caffeine at least 4 to 6 hours before going to sleep. Caffeine is also an ingredient in many diet sodas, iced tea, and pain-relieving drugs like Excedrin.

- Stop drinking caffeine 4 to 6 hours before going to bed
- Drink decaffeinated coffee or herbal tea in the afternoon
Get yourself in the mood.

Stop studying 30 minutes before bed and do something relaxing. Practice yoga, do some deep breathing, stretch, or read (no textbooks!). These activities help relieve stress and reduce muscle tension.

☐ Give myself at least 30 minutes of downtime before bed

Sleep Soundly with Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is often used to reduce stress and foster sleep. Research suggests that aromatics have significant effects on the body even when you’re not aware of them (like during sleep)! ¹

Lavender and jasmine scents have been shown to be especially helpful for relaxation and sound sleep.

Why We Love Lavender

- It contains oils that have sedating effects that relax muscles²
- It has slight soothing and calming effects when inhaled³

Why We’re Jasmine Fans

- It’s scent is calming and relaxing and may effect mood⁴
- Jasmine may also increase mental performance and focus¹

Did You Know?
The less you sleep the more you tend to gain weight.

Leptin is a hormone that affects our feelings of fullness and satisfaction after a meal. Ghrelin is the hormone that stimulates our appetites. When we are sleep deprived, our levels of leptin fall while ghrelin levels increase. This means that we end up feeling hungrier without really feeling satisfied by what we eat, causing us to eat more and consequently gain weight.
Stay active.

Exercise helps you sleep longer and sounder and makes you more alert throughout the day. Make it a priority to get at least 30 minutes of exercise each day. But if you go to the gym, don’t work out within 3 hours of going to bed – this can interfere with your sleep.

- Skip the shuttle and power walk to class
- Get to the gym at least ___ time(s) per week

Sleep only when you’re sleepy (duh.)

Don’t stay in bed trying to sleep if you find yourself tossing and turning. If you can't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed and read a book or do another relaxing activity.

- Get out of bed and do something relaxing if I can’t fall asleep

Create a sleep schedule.

Developing a routine before bed cues your body that it’s time to sleep. A healthy routine may include reading, stretching, or listening to music. It’s also important to go to bed and get up at the same time every day (even on weekends!). If that’s not possible, extend your ‘awake time’ by no more than a few hours and get up as close to your normal schedule as possible.

- Set an alarm to tell me to go to sleep

Good time management skills and not over-committing yourself can help you sleep! Reduce stress & increase sleep by planning ahead, setting personal deadlines, and talking to your professors if you have questions.
Use your bed only for sleep and sex.

To strengthen the association between bed and slumber, don’t eat, go online, do homework, or use your phone extensively in bed. Organize your room so that you can study and sleep in different areas.

☐ Study and socialize somewhere other than my bed

Get comfortable.

Make sure your room is cool, dark, quiet, and comfortable. Use a sleep mask, ear plugs, or ‘white noise’ from a fan to create this atmosphere if you can’t control it yourself.

☐ Use ear plugs, a sleep mask, and ‘white noise’ to foster sleep
☐ Close curtains and shut blinds to block out light

Turn off the clock.

Watching the time tick can keep you awake. If you have a clock, turn it away so you can’t see it. If you use your phone, put it somewhere inconvenient to reach. Focus on relaxing your mind instead of stressing about the time.

☐ Put my phone and/or clock somewhere I can’t easily see it

Shut off screens.

Light from phones, tablets, TVs, and computers suppresses the hormone in the brain that tells you to sleep. Avoid using these devices at least 30 minutes before going to bed. Read a book instead!

☐ Disconnect myself from bright screens 30 minutes before bed
To Nap or Not to Nap?

Research shows that long naps in the late afternoon or early evening reduce sleep quality. However, brief naps in the early afternoon can increase alertness.

If you nap, follow these guidelines:

1. Sleep for just 20 to 30min – power nap – so that you don’t enter deep (REM) sleep

2. If you need a longer nap, limit yourself to 90min so that your body follows its natural sleep/wake cycle

The Impact of Alcohol on Sleep

It takes a minimum of 3 days for the body to recover from a night of heavy drinking. Alcohol intoxication interferes with REM – the deep sleep stage needed to feel rested and refreshed. Here’s a breakdown of what happens after a night of heavy drinking:

**Saturday night** – You go to bed intoxicated. Although you sleep 10 hours, your brain doesn’t enter the REM stage, or enters it during the final few hours of sleep. You wake up feeling tired and sluggish.

**Sunday night** – You have no intention of going out and instead plan to ‘catch up’ on sleep. But tonight your sleep-deprived brain enters REM REBOUND, staying too long in the REM stage. Again, you wake up feeling tired and struggle to focus on studying for Monday’s mid-term.

**Monday night** – Finally, your brain returns to a normal sleep cycle. You wake up on Tuesday feeling rested and refreshed. But it’s a bit too late for your exam!
Dreaming is connected to bursts of electrical activity in the brain stem every 90 minutes during deep sleep. Over a lifetime, an average person spends more than 6 years dreaming!

How to Keep a Dream Journal

1. As soon as you wake up, write down or draw the first images and words that come to mind. Don’t try to interpret, just write!
2. Circle the symbols or words on the page that are important to you.
3. Think about what these might represent. What insights or inspirations do they provide?
4. Ask each symbol, “who are you and why are you in my dream?” Write down the first response that comes to mind, even if it doesn’t make sense!
5. Keep working with the symbol until its importance is clear.

Exam Time Do’s & Don’ts

Do get some sleep and avoid pulling an all-nighter. Your brain needs sleep in order to process and retain information.

Do talk to your roommate about your finals sleep schedule. Plan to be especially respectful of each other’s sleep during this week.

Don’t forget to exercise & take breaks in between study sessions. Physical activity relieves stress, keeps you alert, and helps with sleep.

Don’t use the computer right before bedtime (read instead). Screens suppress the sleep hormone in the brain, keeping you awake.

Think twice before depending on sleep aids like ZzzQuil. While these products can be helpful for short-term insomnia, you should speak with someone at Student Health Services to resolve persistent sleep problems.
Sleep Apps

Simply Being: Guided Meditation for Relaxation and Presence
Meditation can be challenging, but this app makes it easier by leading you through voice-guided, customizable exercises.

Proactive Sleep Alarm Clock
Get personalized advice, generate white noise, keep a sleep diary, and tease out factors that could be affecting your sleep.

Relax Completely by Darren Marks
Participate in guided relaxation and read up on practical relaxation tips that can be used when you don’t have access to your phone.

Sleep Deeply by Darren Marks
A comprehensive app with audio sessions that include special sound waves designed to lull the brain to sleep.

Sleep Stream
Listen to soothing sounds from nature or try hypnosis audio tracks to help you relax and bring on sleep.

My Sleep Goals
Take a moment to write down 3 sleep health goals you have for yourself:

1. ______________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________
Sleep Resources

BU Student Health Services – Wellness & Prevention
Listen to relaxation and visualization audio clips on our website. www.bu.edu/shs/resources and SpreadtheHealthBU.com

BU Student Health Services – Behavioral Medicine
Behavioral Medicine can help you improve your sleep!
To make an appointment, please call (617) 353-3569
www.bu.edu/shs/behavioral

BU Educational Resource Center (ERC)
Is school keeping you from getting a good night rest?
The ERC can help you with academics and time management.
http://www.bu.edu/erc

National Sleep Foundation
The National Sleep Foundation has numerous resources for sleep health.
http://www.sleepfoundation.org

Sleep Health Centers
This network of health clinics specialize in sleep problems.
http://www.sleephealth.com

1. WJU Professor and Students Find Jasmine Odor Leads to More Restful Sleep, Decreased Anxiety and Greater Mental Performance, Wheeling Jesuit University; http://www.wju.edu/about/adm_news_story.asp?iNewsID=539
3. Lavender, University of Maryland Medical Center; http://www.umich.edu/altmed/articles/lavender-000260.htm

Information in this booklet is also adapted from materials prepared by University of New Hampshire Health Services and Campus Health Services at the University of Arizona

Boston University Wellness & Prevention Services
Goodnight Comm Ave tells the classic story of the sleep deprived college student. A favorite of students for generations, this booklet is perfect to share with anyone who dreams of getting a good night sleep.