



Family Health Associates Concussion Clinic

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SLEEPING AFTER A CONCUSSION

After a concussion, your brain requires as much rest as possible. This includes getting enough sleep, at the right times, to help with the healing process. Some who suffer concussions experience sleep abnormalities while they recover.

For the first several days to 1 week after a concussion, you will be encouraged to sleep as much and as often and you feel is necessary. After that, however, you will be instructed to become more structured in your sleep. Below, you will find some recommendations that can help you get good, healing sleep after your concussion:

- Get regular sunlight during the day, even on cloudy days.
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even weekends and holidays.
- Lights out no later than 10 PM.
- Do not take any naps (especially after 3 PM). If you find yourself needing naps, start going to bed a little earlier at night instead.
- Get regular exercise, but limit exercise in the 2-6 hours before bedtime.
- No caffeine or tobacco (cigarettes, vaping, chewing, etc) after 2 PM.
- Avoid eating heavy, fatty meals or drinking a lot of water late in the evening. Try eating a light snack like a glass of warm milk or some cheese and crackers before bed.
- Develop a bedtime routine. Do the same thing every night before going to sleep. Consider taking a warm bath 1 hour before bed. Listen to quiet music or give yourself a foot massage. Avoid reading in the hour or so before bed as this tends to stimulate and wake up the brain.
- Only use your bedroom for sleeping and changing your clothes.
- Create a comfortable sleeping environment in your bedroom. Keep the bedroom at a comfortable temperature (some experts suggest sleeping in a room that is 65 degrees), and as quiet and dark as possible. Some choose to sleep with socks on to keep their feet warm.
- Remove any distractions from your room. This includes TV, computers, tablets, hand held devices, phones, books, gaming consoles, etc. If you watch your clock, turn it away from you or remove it from the room.
- If you can't fall asleep after 15 minutes, go to another room and return to your bed only when you feel tired. You may repeat this as often as needed during the night.
- If you find yourself laying in bed, worrying, set aside some time to relax before going to bed. For example, spend 30 minutes after dinner writing down what's worrying you and what you can do about it.
- Another good way to relax is to focus on your breathing by taking slow, deep breaths while counting to 5. Then listen to the sound of your breath as you breathe out. You can also try to tighten and relax the muscle groups in your body, beginning at your feet and ending with your face muscles.
- Relaxation music may help you relax and fall asleep. For example: try listening to something like the following on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/qYnA9wWFHLI> (listen, but do not watch).