

Getting enough sleep

How much sleep does an adult need each day?

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How much sleep does an adult need each day?

Are you not feeling refreshed and alert when you wake up in the morning, and feeling very tired during the day? Or, do you frequently feel like dozing off while you are in static mode? If your answer is yes, that probably shows you are sleep deprived

The amount of sleep an individual needs varies according to age group. In general, it is recommended that adults (including the elderly) should have 7–8 hours of night's sleep a day.¹ However, a survey has shown that Malaysian adults only get 6.4 hours of sleep on average.²

8 hours – 6.4 hours = 1.6 hours



This means that we are generally **short of 1.6 hours** of sleep every night. When these periods of sleep loss add up, an individual will have a sleep debt of 11.2 hours after a week. Long-term sleep loss is bad for your health!

Recommended amount of sleep according to age group¹: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newborns: 16–18 hours/day Preschool-aged children: 11–12 hours/day School-aged children: At least 10 hours/day Teens: 9–10 hours/day Adults: 7–8 hours/day 	Are you sleep deprived?¹ <p>Keeping a sleep diary could help you find out if you are sleep deprived.</p> <p>Record how much you sleep each night, how alert and rested you feel in the morning, and how sleepy you feel during the day.</p> <p>Compare the amount of time you sleep every night with the amount of sleep recommended for your age group.</p>
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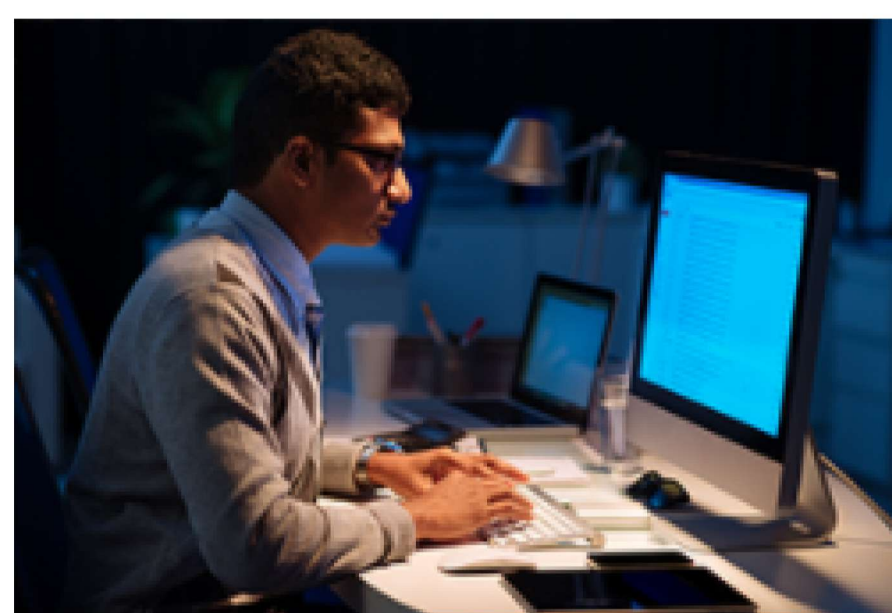
Why are Malaysians not getting enough sleep?



Mobile devices

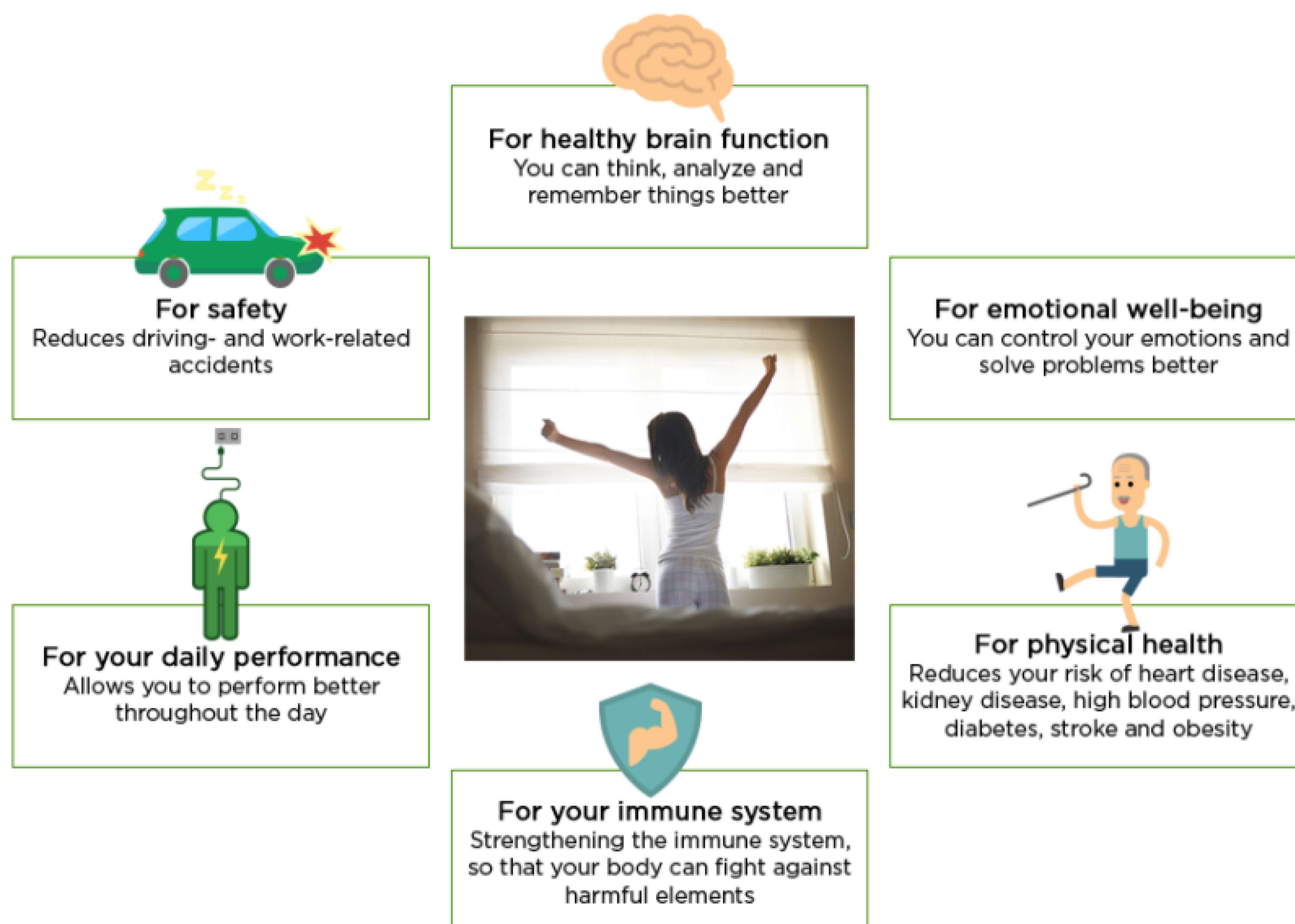


Internet addiction



Personal and work commitments

Why is getting enough sleep important?



Are you sleeping the right way?



You are aware of the importance of a good night's sleep and always sleep according to the amount of hours recommended; however, you still do not feel well rested when you wake up the next day. Sounds familiar? This could mean that you are not getting a quality night's sleep or are not sleeping the right way. Here are some tips which can help to improve your night's sleep¹:

- **Regulate your sleep schedule.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day (including weekends). Never assume that you can replace your sleep loss by sleeping more on your days off than on work days. Extra sleep on days off might help you feel better, but it can disregulate your body's sleep-wake rhythm.
- **Make your body ready to sleep.** Use the hour before bed for quiet time (NO television, NO smart phone, NO work, please)
- **Avoid heavy and/or large meals a few hours before going to bed** (a light snack is fine).
- **Avoid nicotine** (eg, cigarettes), **caffeine** (eg, tea, coffee, chocolate) **and alcoholic drinks before bed.**
- Be physically active in the day – **exercise** (but please, no strenuous exercise 2–3 hours before bed).
- **Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep.** If you are on any medications, talk with your doctor to find out if they are the culprits for keeping you awake at night.
- **Have a good sleeping environment.** Keep your bedroom quiet, cool and dark.
- **Take a hot bath before bed.**
- **Use relaxation techniques before bedtime** (eg, reading or listening to calming music).

If you experience certain sleep patterns such as consistently taking more than 30 minutes to fall asleep every night, waking up more than a few times, or taking frequent naps, you should talk with your doctor to find out if you have a sleep disorder or other health problems.¹

To nap or not to nap?

- Mid-day nap may provide a short-term boost in alertness and performance.¹
- Studies have found that regular mid-day naps could help lower blood pressure.⁴
- Nevertheless, naps do not provide all of the other benefits of night-time sleep. Hence, you should not use naps to make up for your sleep loss.¹
- If you have trouble falling asleep at night, you should limit naps or take naps earlier in the afternoon (before 3 pm, preferably < 20 minutes).¹



Early to bed and early to rise makes you healthy, wealthy, and wise! Make sure you sleep sufficiently every night. With enough sleep, you may find that you are happier and more productive the next day.

References

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3. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Why is sleep important? Available at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/why>. Accessed 19 September, 2019.
4. Medscape. Siesta therapy: Midday napping could help lower bp in patients treated for hypertension. Available at <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/850255>. Accessed 19 September, 2019.