



Sleepless in...Western New York

This month, we asked Soda Kuczkowski, local sleep health educator and the owner of START WITH SLEEP, to tell us her most important advice for getting a good night's rest. Soda has been dedicated to addressing sleep concerns and questions for individuals and businesses in Western New York for over 11 years.

1. **Understand that everyone has individual needs.** You have to focus on what works for you. Some people need more sleep, some need less. It is quality sleep that is important to health and your energy levels throughout the day will tell you everything you need to know.
2. **Set realistic expectations.** The most common reason people face challenges when trying to change behavior or make lifestyle changes is they try to do everything at once. Focus on creating healthy habits, not overwhelming yourself with restrictions. Use tools to help supplement your lifestyle to assist in making gradual small day to day changes that result in better sleep at night and increased energy levels throughout the day.
3. **Be consistent about when you go to bed and when you wake up.** Getting up and going to bed around the same time, even on weekends, is the most important thing you can do to establish good sleep hygiene (habits). Our bodies thrive on regularity and a consistent sleep

3 FREE Apps to Help You Get to Sleep

1. ISLEEP EASY MEDITATIONS, Meditation Oasis

This app is available on both Android and iOS, and it provides free access to guided meditations if you're not yet meditating on your own. If you want full access to a larger variety of guided meditations, Meditation Oasis has a free podcast with meditations on everything from letting go of anxiety to relaxing into sleep.

2. FREEDOM

Do you ever find yourself scrolling through the news or social media far too late into the night? Unplug and unwind by using the Freedom app, for iOS users, which allows you to "shut off" your technology by blocking the internet, social media, and apps. You can try this app out for free, but after 7 uses you have to pay a small fee.

3. F. Lux

F. lux automatically removes the bright blue colors from your phone to help you wind down at night and returns your screen to normal in the day. By blocking bright light, you'll help your body naturally produce melatonin which helps control your sleep and wake cycles. This app is only available for Android phones.

schedule is the best reinforcement for the body's internal clock.

4. **Do something nurturing for yourself.** Diffuse essential oils, take a warm bath, drink your favorite tea (without caffeine), read a book you enjoy, write in your journal, try some yoga stretches, meditate or do a breathing exercise - anything that makes you feel really good. It doesn't have to be complicated or take a lot of time - just make it something that nourishes you. It will go a long way in preparing you for sleep.

If you are interested in a personal sleep assessment, contact Soda Kuczkowski at (716) 235-1505 or check out START WITH SLEEP's website at www.startwithsleep.com for a description of additional services.