Not getting enough sleep? Try one of these tips

One of the biggest health problems in the modern world is sleep deprivation. It can be hard to drop off at night, and even harder to stay asleep until the morning, which can leave you feeling tired, drained and stressed. What's worse is when this leads to you picking up bad sleep habits that make it even more difficult.

Luckily, these are by no means unbreakable. There are always steps you can take to keep yourself well-rested. If you feel like you're not getting the sleep you need, here are some tips and tricks to help you get your eight hours.

Put the phone down!

One of the biggest signals that your brain interprets as a sign to be awake and alert is bright light. You might turn all the lights off and close the curtains, but it will all be for nothing if you spend the time before you go to sleep on your phone.

This goes for all devices with a screen as well; the light they give off is a signal for your brain to keep you awake, so you'll find it harder to drop off. Try to go for an hour before bedtime with your phone, laptop and television off to make it much easier to fall asleep.

Avoid a nightcap

If you want the best night's sleep, try not to drink caffeine too close to bedtime. It will help you drop off, but not stay asleep. Once the effects of the drink wear off in the middle of the night, you are much more likely to wake up.

This goes for other drinks as well. Anything with caffeine is a bad idea, which includes coffee, tea and many fizzy drinks. Even your warming bedtime hot chocolate is a bad idea, as all that sugar will give your body lots of energy that it doesn't need in bed. Stick to water for a better chance of a restful night.

Have a regular bedtime

A surprisingly large part of your daily routine is determined by your internal body clock, but yours might be off-kilter if your sleep pattern is irregular. Essentially, the clock works out when it's time to feel tired and when you should be awake and alert.

However, it can only learn based on your routine. If the time you go to bed varies quite a bit from night to night, you might find yourself struggling to sleep as your body doesn't know when it should be making you drowsy. If you aim to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, you will find it much easier.

Exercise

Perhaps unsurprisingly, people who exercise regularly get the best nights' sleep. However, it doesn't actually take much. A few minutes of light exercise each day can be enough to make sure you get a full eight hours of rest.

You should make sure you aren't doing this too close to your bedtime. Exercising – especially if you opt for a particularly heavy workout – can release adrenaline that keeps you awake and ready for action. Make sure you've stopped sweating a few hours before bed to make sure you get the most out of your physical activity.