

# CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS – HAVE A SNOOZE FEST!



## What Are Circadian Rhythms?

Circadian rhythms are controlled by an area of the brain that is affected by light. They affect:

- Body temperature
- Sleep and wakefulness
- Various hormonal changes

Your circadian rhythm is your body's internal 24 clock that helps to regulate feelings of sleepiness and wakefulness. For example, your body temperature starts to rise during the last hours of sleep. Exercise, hormones, and medications can affect your circadian rhythm. Unfortunately, demands from work, school, and social commitments can also disrupt your sleep pattern.

## Tips on How to Improve Your Sleep

- Having a natural rhythm of exposure to sunlight and darkness at night can promote a good night's rest.
- Practice a routine before bedtime away from bright lights e.g. read a book, spend time with partner, relax, or pray.
- Have a consistent sleeping schedule, even on weekends, to stabilize your circadian rhythm.
- Consider blackout curtains, eye masks, and ear plugs so you can sleep in complete darkness and limit distractions.
- In the morning, go for a walk outside as the outdoor light can signal to your brain that it's the start of the day – alternatively, you can open your curtains or turn on your brightest lights.

## You Need Vitamin D Daily

Healthy adults aged 19-50: 400 – 1000 IU daily  
Over 50 or younger adults at risk (with osteoporosis, multiple fractures, or conditions affecting vitamin D absorption): 800 – 2000 IU daily

## Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorders

### Jet Lag

When a person travels across many time zones, it affects their circadian rhythm. Symptoms include insomnia, daytime sleepiness, irritability, poor concentration, and indigestion. Everyone adapts at different paces – some can adapt quickly while others may need a week.

### Shift Work

If you are working shifts like night shifts or rotating shifts you can have similar symptoms as people crossing time zones. It is harder to have a set sleeping pattern.

### What Can You Do?

- Delay when you go to bed into your normal or intended time (do this gradually)
- Take only short naps (>30 mins)
- Take a walk as soon as you wake up to help reset your internal clock
- Limit using technology in the evening

Source: [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca), [www.sleepcenter.ucla.edu](http://www.sleepcenter.ucla.edu),