



**how
great
britain
sleeps**



welcome

A good night's sleep is essential to staying happy, healthy and productive.

But life in the modern world can make it so much harder to switch off and fall asleep at the end of the day. We're spending more time indoors¹, looking at screens², working longer hours³, exercising less⁴ and generally feeling more stressed out⁵.

And – like a vicious cycle – poor sleep can contribute to making us unmotivated, exhausted and irritable.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

At Silentnight, we're on a mission to help Britain sleep great.

We've surveyed more than 2,000 people to inform our second annual How Great Britain Sleeps report, revealing Brits' bedtime routines, the issues keeping us up at night, and the potential long-term impacts of poor sleep.

For most of us, seven to nine hours sleep is

the best way to set you up for the day ahead, however our survey has found that one in six of us gets less than six hours sleep every night, with one in five saying they can't remember when they last had a decent night's sleep.

Over time, this can contribute to serious consequences for your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

We're proud to be the UK's most trusted sleep brand, helping our nation of sleepers for nearly 80 years. So, we'll be sharing tips and advice to improve Britain's Zzz's.

It's time to sleep great, Britain!

**Tracey Bamber
CEO, Silentnight**

how great britain sleeps

Whilst everyone's body clock is different, scientific studies have indicated that the average adult's brain and body perform best if we get seven to nine hours sleep per night⁶.

Our survey found that only 49% of Brits typically sleep for seven to nine hours, leaving almost as many (47%) missing out on those essential hours of sleep.

Just like last year, the average amount of sleep reported to our researchers is 6.5 hours, remaining consistent regardless of age, gender, and lifestyle factors.

But the survey did find some improvement; in 2023, one in five (22%) people told us they had fewer than five hours sleep every night, but this year that has fallen significantly to just one in 20 (5%).



Introducing Dr Holly Milling

Dr Holly is Silentnight's resident Sleep Specialist, supporting on all things sleep science.

Dr Holly is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and specialist in Behavioural Sleep Medicine. With 16 years of experience in some of London's leading NHS hospitals, she now runs one of the UK's most respected independent sleep clinics while also continuing to work as a clinical supervisor and trainer within the NHS. Holly is passionate about making sleep science accessible to all, helping people unlock the benefits of better sleep for their health and wellbeing.

"Sleep is vital for our physical health, mental wellbeing, and overall functioning, which is why taking care of our sleep has to be a top priority. There's a lot that goes into sleep health; it's not just about biology and psychology but also the social pressures and habits that shape our daily lives.

"This year's report highlights that, while some aspects of our sleep health are improving, there's still more to be done. It's worrying that almost one in five people can't remember the last time they had a good night's sleep. And equally concerning is the significant impact that stress seems to be having on the quality of our rest. By understanding these challenges better, we can take meaningful steps towards improving our sleep and overall wellbeing."

Dr Holly Milling,
Silentnight's resident Sleep Specialist

Natural rhythm

Everyone has the occasional bad night's sleep, but the point where you should be concerned is if you are consistently sleeping for fewer than six hours – like a sixth (16%) of those in our survey – which can have real repercussions for your long-term health.

The length of time we sleep is important because we need enough time to cycle through the different stages of sleep.

Our sleep consists of four stages, which are governed by the circadian rhythm, or our internal 'body clock', and repeat every 90-120 minutes throughout the night.

Stage 1:

Light sleep when your muscles start to relax and your heart rate, breathing and eye movements slow down.

Stage 2:

A deeper phase of light sleep, when your heart rate and breathing continue to slow, eye movements stop and body temperature cools.

Stage 3:

This is the deepest stage of sleep, sometimes called 'slow wave sleep', when your heartbeat, breathing and brain wave activity are all at their lowest levels and your body does the majority of its most important recovery.

Stage 4:

Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep when your heart rate, breathing and blood pressure begin to increase and your dreams are most vivid.





6.5 hours
average amount
of sleep per night

Bedtime story

The research reveals that Brits' average bedtime is 10:36pm.

But that hides considerable variation; more than one in ten (12%) of us go to bed after midnight, rising to one in five (20%) in the 18-24 age group.

There's actually no right or wrong time to go to bed; it depends on the individual.

We all know people who are night owls, who prefer to be active late at night, while others describe themselves as morning larks, who are at their best early doors.

The time we go to bed should therefore be guided by our natural circadian rhythm, so it's important to understand what works best for you.



Resident sleep specialist, Dr Holly Milling, says:

“Night owls face unique challenges when it comes to getting enough sleep in the UK.

“Their natural body clocks are wired for later bedtimes and wake times, which doesn't always align with early work or school schedules. This mismatch can leave night owls chronically sleep deprived.

“Teenagers and young adults can be particularly affected. During this life stage, their body clocks shift later, making them more in tune with night owl patterns and habits. So, if you've ever wondered why teenagers stay up into the early hours and struggle to wake for that morning alarm, they're not being lazy; it's biology!

“Studies have shown when we work with our body clock, we get more done, our mental and physical health improves, and everything feels easier. If you manage a team, consider everyone's sleep needs, for example flexible start times or scheduling meetings between 10am-4pm allows both larks and night owls to perform at their best.”



The poor sleep problem

Poor sleep can be a big problem for our health, careers and relationships.

Brits told our researchers that being tired means they struggle to concentrate (46%), are snappy with others (38%) and lose motivation (36%).

Sleep is important for energy restoration, so many try and boost their energy levels after a bad night's sleep by eating foods that are higher in fat and sugar, but admit this means they eat more unhealthily (27%) and snack more (24%).

Over the long term, this can lead to a risk of dietary health problems.

So, it's a concern that respondents to our study find

falling asleep a problem an average of four nights a week.

And Brits told us they only wake up feeling well rested three times a week on average.

But, more worryingly, almost one in six (15%) say they never wake up feeling well rested and almost one in five (18%) say they can't remember when they last had a decent night's sleep.

And it's not just falling asleep that's an issue, it's staying asleep too.

Wakey wakey

Our research found that the average person wakes up twice in a typical night's sleep, and the most common time

to wake up is 2.46am. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most typical reason for getting up in the night is needing to go to the toilet, as cited by more than two thirds (68%) of those we surveyed.



common time to wake up

But when our survey asked what else was causing people to stay awake at night, the pressures and pace of modern life are clearly a problem.

Respondents said they struggle to switch off (33%), are stressed (30%) and worry about their family (17%).

A poor sleep environment can also cause sleepless nights, with issues including overheating (32%), being too cold (15%), and bedrooms that are too bright (7%).

The morning after the night before

A bad night's sleep can cause real problems during the day, which can have a negative impact on our work, relationships and mood.

Respondents told our survey that a poor night's sleep can leave them feeling tired (64%), with a lack of energy (55%), poor concentration (35%) and confusion (9%).

There are physical consequences too, including headaches (32%), sore eyes (25%) and nausea (12%).

And, over time, tiredness affects our appearance, causing bags under eyes (26%), bloodshot eyes (10%), pale skin (9%), wrinkles (7%), acne (6%), stooped posture (6%) and fine hair (5%).

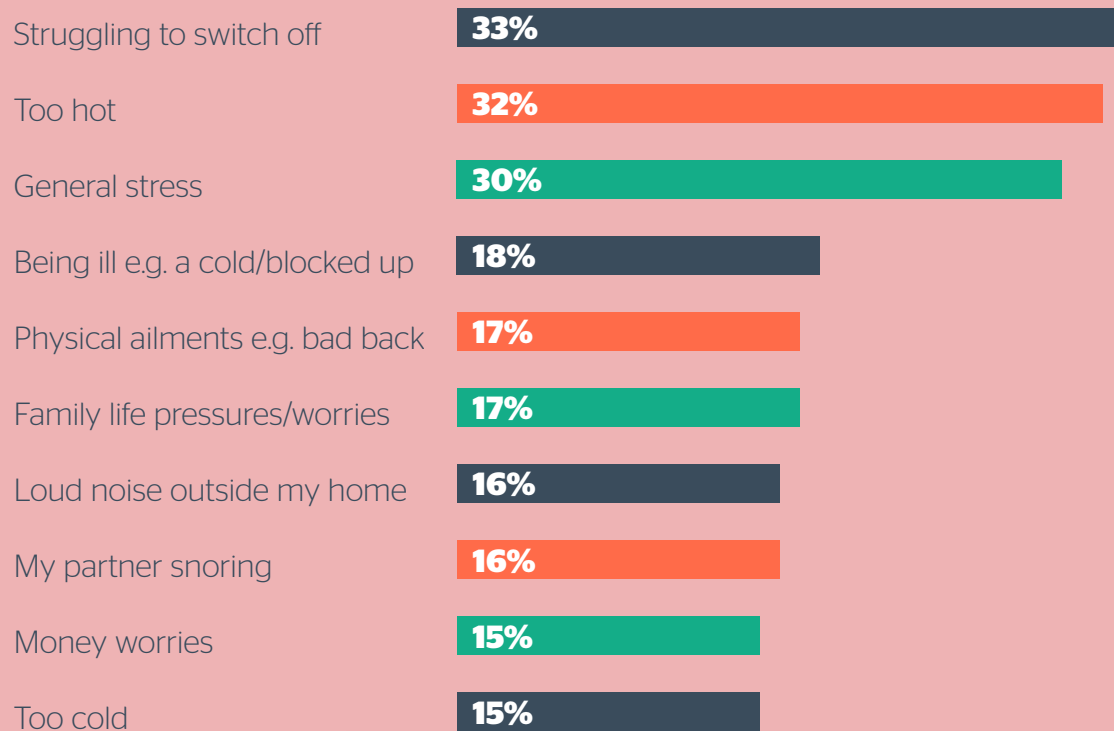


"These findings are a stark reminder of just how many of us are struggling to get the sleep we need to function at our best. With nearly half of participants getting less than six hours a night and 18% unable to recall their last good night's sleep, it's clear that poor sleep is a nationwide issue that needs urgent attention."

Dr Holly Milling,
Silentnight's resident
Sleep Specialist



Top 10 reasons Brits struggle to sleep or wake up in the night



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**Sleep disorders
are more common
among night owls.**

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sleep solutions

We've seen that over half of Brits struggle to sleep at least some of the time, and it's causing them a huge range of problems.

Despite the fact that four in five (81%) of us take steps to help us sleep better, this is clearly proving ineffective with almost nine in ten of us (87%) still suffering from the symptoms of poor sleep.

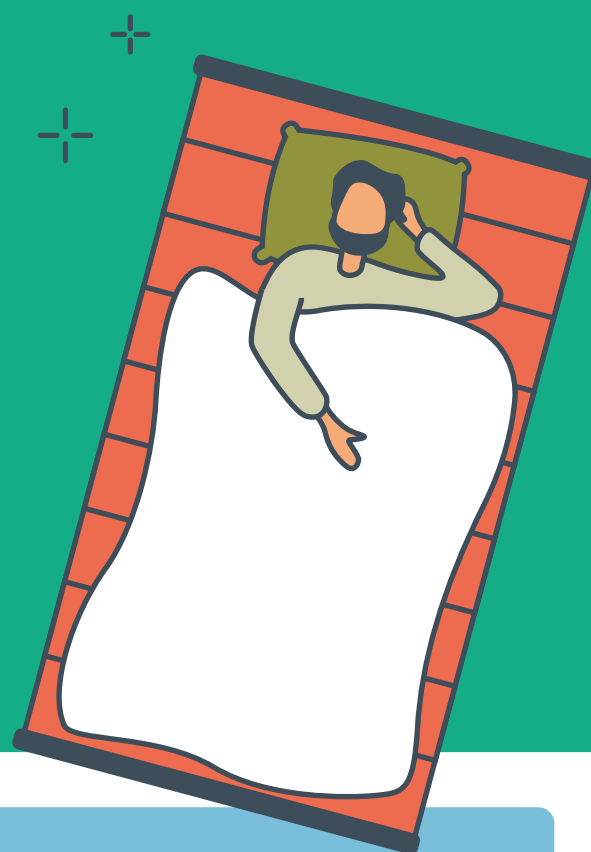
While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, experts at Silentnight have shared their top five tips that can be used to achieve a better night's sleep.

1. Prioritise and personalise your sleep

"Your sleep is essential to your well-being and it's okay if it hasn't always been a priority.

"Life gets busy and our sleep can often take a back seat but reflecting on your relationship with sleep is an important first step.

"Think about what your body needs and how you can work with your natural body patterns, whether you're a night owl or a morning lark. Take small, manageable steps to address any stress or habits that might be interrupting your rest, such as practicing mindfulness or avoiding caffeine after lunch. You deserve to feel rested and recharged each morning!"



2. Keep it consistent

"Sleep and our body clocks love routine, so as best you can, aim to wake up at the same time every morning (even at weekends!), to support your sleep and overall health."

3. Create a wind down routine

"Just like your body needs time to wake up, it also needs time at the end of the day to calm and wind down, ready for a good night's sleep."

"Try setting an alarm one hour before bed to start winding down and switching off from the day. Use this time to calm the mind and body, with relaxing activities and reduced screen time to help your mind settle."

"Think of this time as a treat, allowing your body and mind to prepare for a night of rest and restorative sleep."



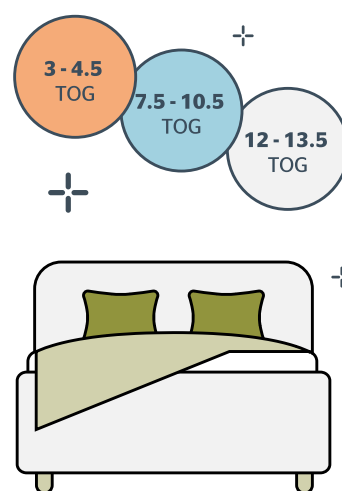
4. Chill out

"To get good quality sleep, our core body temperature needs to drop by a couple of degrees – this means avoiding piping hot showers or baths right before bed."

"When it comes to your mattress and bedding, it's important you tune in to what feels most comfortable to you. If you're a hot sleeper, opt for a duvet with a lower tog rating and a mattress using natural materials

or polyester which can help to effectively disperse heat and humidity – Silentnight's Eco Comfort and Lift Refresh ranges are great examples."

"Whereas if you feel the chill in the night, choose a duvet with a higher tog and look for a memory foam mattress that gently moulds to your body's contours, absorbing energy and relieving built up pressure as you sleep."



5. Your mattress matters

"Your spine rehydrates at night, which helps keep everything aligned, but when you are not properly supported through the night, your spine can't absorb liquid properly, putting your muscles under strain and leading to aches and pains."

"All Silentnight mattresses use zoning technology, which provides different levels of support for different parts of your body, to relieve pressure and help keep your spine aligned."

"Letting your mattress breathe through the day by pulling your covers all the way back so it can properly dry out, will help keep it in good condition."

"By investing in a good mattress that matches your needs, and taking care to look after it, you can help keep it working properly and maximise its lifespan."



Visit www.silentnight.co.uk to find your perfect sleep solution.

methodology

This is the second in a series of annual reports that aims to assess the sleep habits of UK consumers and business leaders, including the impact on their health and wellbeing, and implications for their working lives.

It also considers the availability, awareness and efficacy of information and support relating to sleep.

To gather representative data, Silentnight commissioned independent market research consultancy Censuswide to survey 2,000 UK adults between 10 August and 12 August 2024.

contacts

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Sources

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