



# reCAPS

**Counseling & Psychological Services**  
**University of California, Santa Cruz**

## Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

Studies of university students show that they tend to sleep less than the 8 (or more) hours per night that most older adolescents need. On average, college students get approximately 7 hours.

In a large [study](#), more than one in three college students described their sleep as “fairly to very bad.” The costs of too little sleep have been well documented and include irritability,

depression, academic problems, and even falling asleep at the wheel.

There are many causes of sleep problems among college students. As with any age group, stress is one cause. Students may be particularly at risk for stress-related sleep issues because they are dealing with the new academic, social, and emotional challenges that young adulthood and being at college can bring.

Another reason students may have trouble sleeping is having an irregular sleep schedule. The novelty of living on a college campus surrounded by peers can make it hard to go to bed at a decent hour, especially when there are a lot of late night social activities happening. Being able to sleep late on weekends after a late night makes it even easier to delay bedtime.

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### All About CAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) offers confidential mental health services to registered UCSC students all year:

- Helpful workshops, trainings, and self-help tools
- A variety of therapy and support groups
- Let's Talk drop-in consultations
- Brief individual and couples counseling
- Referrals to on- and off-campus resources
- Crisis services in person Mon–Fri 8 am–5 pm and by phone 24/7 at (831) 459-2628

To make an appointment, call (831) 459-2628 or stop by (Student Health Center, East Wing, 2nd floor) weekdays between 8 am and 5 pm. To learn more, visit our [website](#), check out the [CAPS blog](#), and like us on [Facebook](#)!



**The stages of getting out of bed in the morning...**

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Unfortunately, when your week and weekend sleep schedules are radically different, this can lead to sleep problems.

The good news is that there are ways you can develop better sleep habits, and virtually all of them are free and nonaddictive. Below are a few suggestions that can help you get better sleep:

1. Use your bed only for sleep (or sex). When you use your bed primarily for sleeping, your body associates the bed with feeling relaxed and restful, making it easier to fall asleep.
2. If you are having trouble falling asleep, don't keep lying in bed, as this can cause your body to associate your bed with being awake and frustrated. After about 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing (such as reading a non-school book or listening to soothing music), then get back in bed later and try to sleep again.
3. Try to go to bed and get up around the same time every day. This can be a challenge for students who have different schedules every day, but it can help with sleep.
4. Avoid naps during the day. If you do nap, set an alarm and keep it short (i.e., a 20-minute power nap). Napping can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
5. Avoid stimulants in the afternoon and evening, such as caffeine, cigarettes, and ADHD medications, which can interfere with falling asleep. It's not a good idea to use alcohol or pot to fall asleep; although they may allow you to fall asleep, they interfere with the quality of sleep, causing you to feel unrested in the morning.
6. Avoid watching the clock or dwelling on your not being able to fall asleep. Give your mind something relaxing to focus on, such as counting deep breaths or visualizing a pleasant, relaxing place like a beach.
7. Try to minimize environmental factors that interfere with sleep, such as noise (use a white noise machine, fan, or earplugs) or light (turn off lights or use an eye mask).
8. Don't panic if you get less sleep than you wanted on a particular night. Even if you are tired the next day, you'll just make it worse by stressing about it.

Managing sleep problems behaviorally tends to be more effective in the long term than relying on over-the-counter or prescription sleep aids or alcohol or pot. If insomnia is an ongoing issue for you and the tips listed here have not helped (or not helped enough), consider seeing a therapist or medical clinician or visiting a sleep clinic to get additional help. You may also try an app for insomnia that provides tools for better sleep—there are a number of good ones out there.

Adapted from “Helping College Students Manage Sleep Issues,” by Seth Gillihan, *Psychology Today*, Sept. 6, 2016.

## Additional Resources

[American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

2510 N. Frontage Road  
Darien, IL 60561

[Sleep Education Website](#)

American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
2510 N. Frontage Road  
Darien, IL 60561

[National Sleep Foundation](#)

1010 N. Glebe Road, Suite 310  
Arlington, VA 22201

## Dear CAPS,

*Why does CAPS offer brief individual therapy, not open-ended therapy? What do you mean by brief? How many sessions?*

—Curtis Curious

There are a couple reasons CAPS offers brief, not long-term or open-ended therapy. One is supply and demand: We get thousands of requests for services every year, and it would not be possible for us to provide ongoing individual therapy to every student who asks for it. Another important reason is that research shows that brief therapy is effective in a number of situations that are common among college students. For instance, brief therapy can be useful to help students get

help with academic or social problems, reduce anxiety or depression symptoms, and address adjustment issues (e.g., homesickness, dealing with a breakup, preparing for graduation). It can also help stabilize a student who is in crisis and prepare them for further treatment.

“Brief therapy” at CAPS is not defined by a specific number of sessions and may entail anywhere from a couple up to a handful of sessions, depending on the situation. Each CAPS therapist uses their judgment in deciding on the course of treatment in helping the client reduce symptoms, improve insight, and boost coping. In some cases, the CAPS therapist will suggest off-campus open-ended therapy or other services, either instead

of brief therapy at CAPS or after brief therapy if the student still needs or wants additional help.

Keep in mind that one-on-one therapy is not always the best or only way for a student to get help. CAPS provides a wide range of services other than brief individual counseling, including workshops, groups, self-help tools, and our Let’s Talk drop-in consultation program. We also provide crisis services for students who require immediate help due to risk to self or others or other severe symptoms or situations.

Read about the services we offer on our [website](#), or learn more by calling us during business hours at (831) 459-2628.

## Beating the Winter Blues

Even in Central California with mild winters, some people experience “winter blues”—lower energy and mood. There’s a reason: Circadian rhythms (which are based on a “master clock” in the brain and tell us to sleep when it’s dark and wake when it’s light) get out of whack with shorter and darker days.

According to experts, one way to combat the winter blues is to keep the same schedule all year. Avoid staying up later and sleeping later in the winter, and keep your bedtime and waking times about the same on weekends as during the week.

Another mood booster is morning sunshine. Even better, exercise in the morning when it’s light (either

by going outside or exercising near a window) for a double dose of natural “uppers.” Keeping your room as dark as possible at night for sleep is also important for healthy circadian rhythms. Even a dim light, such as from a laptop, may disrupt your sleep.

A broad-spectrum white light lamp may help those who need a little more of a boost in winter. The recommended use is about 30 minutes a day in the early morning.

For a small percentage of people, winter can bring Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a more serious form of winter blues that is actually Major Depressive Disorder triggered by the shorter, darker days. If your symptoms seem severe, talk to a doctor or therapist.





## Upcoming Events

See our [website calendar](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more upcoming events.

**WELLNESS WORKSHOPS:** CAPS offers a different drop-in workshop every Wednesday from 3:30 to 4:30 pm at our central office. These hour-long workshops provide info and tools for being mentally healthier. Topics include self-compassion, mindfulness, healthy thought patterns, how positive psychology relates to academic success, and improving focus. Read more on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page. No sign-up needed.

**EMBRACE YOUR LIFE:** EYL is a three-part workshop series that uses mindfulness-based tools to increase insight and self-awareness and build coping. The skills learned in EYL apply to a range of issues, including managing stress and difficult emotions. Each hour-long workshop provides info and experiential skills. Series start on different days throughout the quarter. Read more and see the schedule on our [website](#), or call to get more info and sign up at (831) 459-2628.

**LET'S TALK:** Let's Talk is a drop-in space where you can have a brief, confidential, one-time chat with a professional CAPS counselor. It's free, and you don't need an appointment—just walk in! Let's Talk is held four

afternoons a week at different locations around campus. All registered undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to all locations of Let's Talk. Read more and see the schedule on our [website](#).

**SUPPORTING SURVIVORS:** Come to this workshop to learn more about supporting survivors of sexual assault, provided by a confidential advocate from UCSC's CARE Office. Thursday, January 19th, 6 to 8 pm, Women's Center, Cardiff House. For more info or disability accommodations, email [crtaylor@ucsc.edu](mailto:crtaylor@ucsc.edu).

**REVENGE PORN:** Attend this workshop on "revenge porn" (posting explicit photos or videos of a person without their consent, often by a former partner in order to cause them distress and embarrassment) to learn more about what it is and about relevant University policies and California laws. Provided by UCSC's CARE Office. Thursday, January 26th, 7 to 8:30 pm, Porter I Lounge. For more info or disability accommodations, email [crtaylor@ucsc.edu](mailto:crtaylor@ucsc.edu).

**WHAT'S YOUR EMOJI?** Come to this CAPS-sponsored event to get a free, brief depression/mood screening and information about services on and off campus. Gift bags for all who participate! Student Health Center, Thursday, February 9th, 10 am to 1 pm.



WORRIER POSE

Gemma CORRELL