

## Do You Have Healthy Sleep Habits?

by Amy Scholten, M.P.H.

Your sleep habits have a pervasive effect on many aspects of your health including cognitive function, immune response, mental health, weight, cardiovascular function, and your susceptibility to accidents. Healthy sleep habits are important at any age. The following assessment is designed to help you determine how healthy your sleep habits are. Please keep in mind that this is not a diagnostic tool but a general assessment. Please see your health care provider for more in depth testing on sleep.

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and select the answer that best describes you. When finished, interpret your score at the bottom of the page.

**1. How often do you go to bed and wake up at the same time?**

- a) Most of the time, give or take 30 minutes
- b) More often than not, but I tend to stay up late/sleep late a few times a week, such as on weekends
- c) Rarely, because my lifestyle won't allow it (for example, I work the night shift or rotating shifts, I travel frequently to different time zones, or I'm caring for a baby or an ill person)

**2. What best describes your sleeping environment?**

- a) My bedroom is usually dark, quiet and a comfortable temperature
- b) Sometimes I'm uncomfortable due to light, noise or temperature
- c) My sleep is frequently disturbed by bright light, noise, hot or cold temperatures

**3. How often do you exercise?**

- a) Regularly – most days of the week
- b) A few times a week
- c) Rarely

**4. At what time of day do you exercise?**

- a) Before 2 pm
- b) After 2 pm
- c) I don't exercise, or I exercise rigorously right before bed

**5. Do you eat anything 2-4 hours before you go to bed?**

- a) Not usually
- b) Yes - a light meal or snack

c) Yes – a heavy meal

**6. How often do you hear sounds that distract you or keep you awake when you're trying to fall asleep?** (For example, people talking inside or outside your house, pets, TV or radio inside or outside your house, traffic, your partner snoring, a dripping faucet, noisy neighbors).

- a) Rarely
- b) Occasionally
- c) Frequently

**7. How often do you take naps?**

- a) Rarely or never
- b) A few times a week
- c) Regularly

**8. Do you drink caffeinated coffee, tea or soda in the afternoon, evening, or within a few hours of going to bed?**

- a) Rarely or never
- b) A few times a week
- c) Regularly

**9. Do you smoke cigarettes after dinner time or within a few hours of going to bed?**

- a) Rarely or never
- b) A few times a week
- c) Regularly

**10. Do you have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep?**

- a) No, I sleep pretty well most of the time
- b) Sometimes I have difficulty sleeping, especially if I'm stressed or upset
- c) Yes, I rarely ever have a good night's sleep

**11. Do you have a calming bedtime ritual such as taking a warm bath, meditating, or listening to soft music?**

- a) Yes, most nights
- b) Yes, some nights – like when I feel the need to calm down
- c) Rarely or never

**12. Do you ever use sleeping pills to help get to sleep?**

- a) Never
- b) On occasion
- c) Regularly

**13. What do you tend to think about when you get into bed at night?**

- a) Nothing, I just let my mind shut off and then I drift off to sleep
- b) Trivia, or pleasant thoughts
- c) My problems and worries

**14. Do you use your bed for activities other than sleeping and sex?** (Examples include reading, watching TV, working, studying, having long conversation with your partner, using the computer, listening to music, and eating).

- a) Rarely or never
- b) Sometimes
- c) Often

**15. How soundly do you typically sleep?**

- a) Soundly through the night until I wake up in the morning
- b) Soundly with one or two interruptions (such as using the bathroom or taking care of a pet)
- c) Poorly - there are lots of interruptions in my sleep, or I have great difficulty getting to sleep

**16. How often do you find that you can't shut your thoughts off when you go to bed?**

- a) Rarely or never
- b) Occasionally, if a lot is going on or I'm under stress
- c) Frequently

**17. Do you take any supplements or medications that interfere with your sleep?**

- a) Rarely or never
- b) Occasionally
- c) Regularly

**18. If you find that you cannot get to sleep, what do you do?**

- a) I do any of the following: get up and sit in a chair, read a boring book, try some relaxation techniques, or occasionally take a sleeping pill or herbal remedy
- b) Continue to lie in bed and try to clear my head and relax

- c) I do any of the following: have an alcoholic drink, smoke, have a snack, regularly take a sleeping pill, read an interesting book, exercise, watch TV or browse the internet.

## Scoring

Number of a, b, and c Answers	Point Value for Answers	Total Point Value (multiply total number of a, b, and c answers by their corresponding point value)
Number a answers:	All a answers = <b>1 point</b>	
Number of b answers:	All b answers = <b>2 points</b>	
Number of c answers:	All c answers = <b>3 points</b>	
		<b>Score (add total of a, b, and c points):</b>

Your Score	Interpretation
<b>18-28</b>	Good job! Your score suggests that over all, you tend to practice good sleep habits.
<b>29-39</b>	Your score suggests that you have a few habits that could be impairing your ability to get good sleep. Review your b and c answers to see where you may want to make some changes.
<b>40-54</b>	Your score suggests that you have too many habits that could be sabotaging your sleep. Work on changing these behaviors (in your b and c answers) and you may see an improvement in the quality and/or quantity of your sleep.

### Source:

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### Biography

Amy Scholten, MPH, has a Master of Public Health in health promotion and education from the University of South Carolina and a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition from Framingham State College. She is a freelance health writer and has taught stress management at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY, USA.