

Rest and Sleep



REFERENCES

According to Statistics Canada, roughly one-third of Canadians are getting less than 7 hours of sleep per night. 66.8% of Canadians reported poor quality of sleep and 39.2% reported clinical insomnia during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a student, meeting deadlines, adjusting to new time zones, and feelings of stress, may lead you to struggle with sleep and rest. Data from the spring 2019 National College Health Assessment survey suggests that 29% of students have sleep difficulties that are affecting their academic studies. As you will see in this infosheet, different kinds of sleep and rest are critical for our mental health.

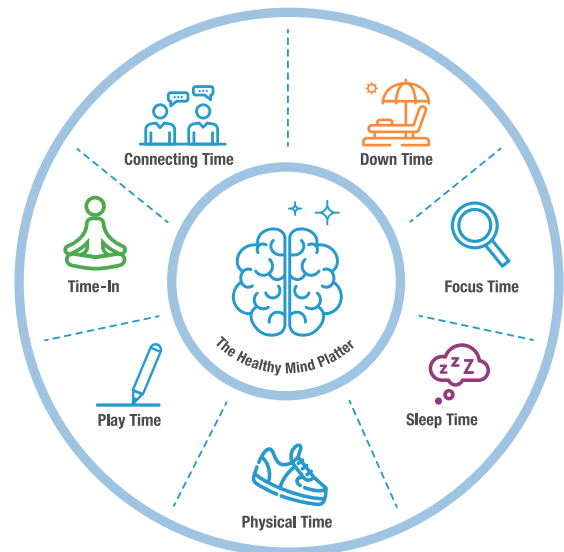
Dan Siegel's Healthy Mind Platter

The Healthy Mind Platter, developed by Dr. Dan Siegel, works similarly to the [Canada Food Guide](#), except instead of food, it provides guidance on the kinds of activities to include in your day for a healthy mind featured in the healthy mind platter that you as a student can use to get more rest:

Time-in refers to time spent in quiet internal reflection, this includes all forms of meditation and prayer.

Down time refers to time spent letting your mind wander without any specific goal.

Sleep time refers to time spent asleep; whether you're napping or getting your nightly slumber.



Mindfulness: Paying attention to the present moment, without judgement

Meditation: A formalized type of mindfulness

Time-In

Open Monitoring Meditation: Monitor incoming sensations, whether they are sounds, sights, smells, your posture, or internal thoughts and feelings, and allow these sensations to pass by without attachment or judgement.

Focused Attention Meditation: Maintain non-judgemental attention on a particular object, thought, or sensation, such as the breath, a mantra, or a part of the body, and allow any other thoughts and sensations to pass by without attachment.

Movement Meditation: This is a meditation that is done while moving intentionally, and can include walking, yoga, and tai chi. In this kind of meditation, you focus on the sensations both in and outside your body.

Benefits of Meditation:

- It impacts the brain and the whole body by reducing markers of stress, like cortisol, blood pressure and heart rate.
- It can make you more mindful, compassionate, and can give you a heightened sense of psychological well-being.



Down Time

Our minds wander about 30-50% of our days and activate specific regions of our brain whenever we do so.

Daydreaming is adaptive in a few different ways:

- It lets us plan for the future by organizing our goals and bringing them to mind as we do our daily activities.
- It allows us to be more creative.
- It involves a process called **attentional cycling**, which is what allows us to rotate through the different information streams we're being exposed to at any given moment.
- It dishabituates us to whatever it is we're learning, meaning that it gives us short breaks in-between our tasks.

Sleep Time

There are some very serious consequences to not getting enough sleep, some of these consequences include:

- Poor concentration
- Poor memorization
- Emotional disturbances
- Slower reactions
- Higher sensitivity to pain

Research has shown that the impairment in performance after **20–25 hours of sleeplessness** is comparable to the performance of someone with a **0.10% blood alcohol concentration**



Sleep Hygiene Tips

These tips can help you wind down and have better quality of sleep.

- ★ Keep a consistent routine, whether it's the weekend or a weeknight you should be going to bed and waking up at approximately the same time.
- ★ Regular exercise is proven to help us fall asleep at night.
- ★ Take time to wind down towards the end of your day.
- ★ Link being in bed with sleeping, so try to avoid doing other things in bed.
- ★ Try not to look at your electronics right before bed, or just as you wake up.
- ★ Plan ahead for 'daylight savings' time changes. This way you can adjust seamlessly when the clocks change in the fall and in the winter.
- ★ If you are having trouble falling asleep, don't stay in bed, after 20 minutes get up and do something else that is relaxing, like reading a book on the couch.
- ★ Make sure you get access to sunlight at some point in the day. If that's hard to do, there are sun lamps specifically designed to trick your eyes into thinking they've received sunlight.

Can't sleep because of racing thoughts? Try keeping a journal next to your bed to write down any and all worries that are preventing you from sleeping.

