



Sleep Logs

by
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Tracking sleep patterns with a sleep log, a sleep diary, or a sleep journal helps us identify possible causes of sleep disruptions. A sleep log is a written record of sleep times, awakenings and factors that help or hinder getting to sleep. Keeping a sleep log can improve sleep patterns and may even help detect more serious health problems of which lack of sleep is only a symptom.

Who Needs a Sleep Log?

Sleep logs can help people of any age better understand their sleep problems. While parents must document details of a child’s sleep, teens and adults alike can track their own sleep patterns. Sleep logs are effective ways to detect the causes of sleep problems while also improving sleep habits.

Sleep Logs as Diagnostic Tools

Obtaining a sleep history can be helpful in successfully treating insomnia, nightmares, anxiety and other conditions. Keeping a detailed sleep log can help identify disturbances that prevent your child from getting enough sleep; including stress or poor sleep hygiene (such as eating in bed unless needed).

Sleep logs provide a first step in identifying and breaking habits that may cause sleep deprivation. Therapists may also suggest keeping a sleep log to track emotional issues that may cause insomnia.

Starting A Sleep Log

Sleep logs may record a range of factors related to sleep patterns, including:

- Bedtime activities
- When lights are turned out
- Approximately how long it takes to fall asleep
- Disruptions from outside sources (what they were and the time each occurred)
- Number of waking periods during the night
- Time of morning awakening and when the person gets out of bed
- How the child feels on awakening (rested, tired, alert, cranky, etc.)



Sleep logs may also include a grading system to help parents to judge quality of sleep. For example:

0 = sleepless night, no sleep periods, sleep hygiene strategies are not effective

1 = sleepless night with occasional periods of sleep (under 30 min.), sleep hygiene strategies may or may not be working

2 = child is asleep most of the night, 2-3 awakenings, strategies are effective in helping the child to resume sleep

3 = child is asleep during the night

Other details that people record in sleep logs include:

- Beverages and foods consumed before sleeping
- Time of last meal or snack before bedtime
- Daily exercise
- Medications taken, whether over-the-counter or prescription
- Number, length and time of daytime naps

Sleeping patterns should be logged for at least two to three weeks to reveal possible causes of sleep problems. Once sleep logs reveal existing sleep patterns, people can begin to make changes to their sleep habits. For instance, the sleep hygiene strategies may need further tuning, the disruptions from outside sources may need to be looked at. Sometimes, an expectation of an 8-hour sleep per night may need an

adjustment as well.

Parents may use a variety of ways to record the data: notebooks, spreadsheets, apps for the technically advances. Have a Nice Sleep.

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