



Live Well, Work Well

August 2026

5 Ways to Sleep Better in the Summer

A good night's sleep is crucial for overall health and well-being, but as the days grow longer and temperatures rise, many people find falling and staying asleep increasingly difficult. The increase in daylight hours delays your body's production of melatonin, which promotes sleep. This impacts your circadian rhythm, the body's internal clock that regulates your sleep-wake cycle. The longer summer days tell your body to stay awake longer and may make it more difficult for you to fall asleep.

Hot weather can also influence sleep patterns by raising your body temperature. This moves your body into a heightened state of awareness, preventing you from falling asleep or waking you up. In addition, people may have busy social calendars, further interfering with their regular sleep schedules. All these disruptions can make it challenging to get restful sleep during the summer.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine found that 1 in 3 people say they sleep less in the summer.

Summer sleep disturbances can be frustrating, but try these five tips to improve your sleep quality:

1. **Keep a consistent schedule.** Late nights can happen in the summer, but try to stick to a regular and consistent sleep schedule to regulate your circadian rhythm.
2. **Create a cool sleep environment.** Keep your bedroom cool with fans and air conditioning, or prop doors and windows open. The best temperature for sleep is 65 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. **Use lightweight fabrics.** Opt for lightweight and moisture-wicking pajamas and bedding. Materials like cotton, linen, bamboo and silk can help you stay comfortable.
4. **Try a sleep mask.** Longer daylight hours can disrupt your sleep cycle, so wearing a sleep mask can help darken the room. Experts advise against blackout curtains; allowing some light alerts your body that the day is coming.
5. **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated in the heat, but avoid large amounts right before bed to prevent waking up for bathroom trips.

Understanding how summer's long days, high temperatures and lifestyle changes can affect your sleep can allow you to take action to improve your slumber. If you have questions or concerns about your sleep quality, contact your doctor.

Well-being Tips for Summer Festivals and Fairs

With sunny days, seasonal breaks and time off, summer is a popular time for public outdoor events. Festivals and fairs carry several health and safety risks (e.g., heat-related illness, sun exposure and dehydration), as well as crowd safety hazards and foodborne illness from vendors. Consider these tips to stay healthy and safe at festivals and fairs:

- **Plan ahead.** Check the weather to know how to dress, and familiarize yourself with the venue layout so you can quickly find exits, first-aid stations and water refill points. Stick with your group and set a meet-up plan in case you get separated.
- **Check event policies.** Review the venue's website for rules on bags, water bottles, sunscreen containers and umbrellas.
- **Stay cool and hydrate.** Wear light, breathable clothing, drink water throughout the day and take shade breaks to cool down.

- **Use sun protection.** Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen and reapply every two hours. Consider wearing a hat or sunglasses for extra protection.
- **Protect your hearing.** Use earplugs or noise-canceling headphones in loud areas to reduce hearing damage.
- **Prioritize your personal safety.** Use anti-theft bags, keep valuables close and stay aware of your surroundings to navigate crowds and avoid hazards.
- **Eat and drink responsibly.** Choose vendors with clean setups and proper food safety equipment, or eat beforehand or pack your own food if allowed. If drinking alcohol or caffeine, balance it with water to avoid worsening dehydration or heat illness.

Prioritizing your health and safety at festivals and fairs can help you minimize risks and maximize fun.

Are You Up to Date On Your Vaccines?

Every August, National Immunization Awareness Month promotes the importance of immunizations at all life stages. Vaccination protects against severe illnesses and complications of vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles, polio, hepatitis, meningococcal meningitis and COVID-19.

Vaccinations are so vital that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers immunization schedules to help you understand if you or others are up to date on shots:

- [Infants and children](#) (birth to age 6)
- [Preteens and teens](#) (ages 7-18)

- [Adults](#) (ages 19 and older)
- [Pregnant people](#) (before, during and after pregnancy)

Getting vaccines at the recommended time is the best way to protect against serious diseases. If you're behind on routine vaccinations, consider getting vaccinated as soon as possible. Your doctor can offer personalized guidance and provide more information about vaccines. Flu season is right around the corner, so pharmacies and clinics may soon begin getting this year's shots in.

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

August 2026

The Heat's Impact on Mental Health

As summer temperatures climb, most people think first about physical risks like dehydration or heatstroke. However, extreme heat can also take a real toll on mental health. Research has linked hot weather to increased irritability, anxiety and fatigue, as well as higher rates of aggression and even psychiatric hospitalizations. Heat can disrupt sleep, drain energy and put extra strain on the nervous system, all of which can worsen mood and make it harder to cope with everyday stress. People with existing mental health conditions, older adults and those without access to air conditioning are especially vulnerable.

Understanding this connection is the first step toward protecting yourself and those around you as temperatures rise. In addition, the following tips can help protect your mental health in the heat:

- **Prioritize sleep.** Hot nights can make quality rest harder to come by. Keep your bedroom cool with fans, blackout curtains or a portable air conditioner.
- **Stay hydrated.** Even mild dehydration can affect concentration and mood, so drink water consistently throughout the day, not just when you feel thirsty.
- **Take breaks from the heat.** Spend part of your day in spaces like libraries, malls or community cooling centers if your home lacks air conditioning.
- **Stay connected.** Check in on friends, family and neighbors, especially those who are elderly or isolated. Social support helps buffer the emotional effects of heat.
- **Adjust your schedule.** Schedule demanding tasks or exercise for cooler parts of the day, like early morning or evening, to reduce physical and mental strain.
- **Recognize the signs.** Irritability, concentration issues and unusual fatigue can be early signs that heat is affecting you. Give yourself permission to slow down and cool off.

It's easy to focus on the physical dangers of extreme heat, but it's just as important to recognize its effect on your mental health. Making small, manageable changes to your routine can really help you feel better when temperatures rise.

Provided by Pierce Insurance Agency, Inc.

6 Tips to Reduce Overthinking

Overthinking is something almost everyone experiences, replaying conversations, worrying about decisions or imagining worst-case scenarios on a loop. While it's natural to reflect on problems, chronic overthinking can drain your energy, fuel anxiety and make it harder to actually solve the issues you're focused on. Instead of leading to clarity, it often traps people in cycles of doubt and rumination.

The good news is that overthinking is a habit, and like any habit, it can be reshaped with the right strategies and a bit of practice. Consider these six tips to reduce overthinking:

1. **Notice when it's happening.** Awareness is the first step. When you catch yourself spiraling, simply saying to yourself, "I'm overthinking this", can interrupt the cycle.
2. **Set a time limit.** Give yourself a specific window (e.g., ten minutes) to think through a problem. When time is up, consciously shift your attention elsewhere.
3. **Challenge the thought.** Ask yourself if the worry is based on facts or assumptions. Often, overthinking involves jumping to conclusions rather than working from evidence.
4. **Focus on what you can control.** Redirect energy toward actionable steps instead of hypothetical outcomes you can't influence.
5. **Practice mindfulness.** Grounding techniques, like focusing on your breath or naming five things you can see, help anchor you in the present moment rather than the past or future.
6. **Talk it out.** Sharing your thoughts with someone you trust can offer perspective and stop ideas from looping endlessly in your own mind.

Overthinking often feels productive, but it rarely leads anywhere new. By building small habits that interrupt the cycle, you can free up mental space for clearer thinking, better decisions and a calmer mind overall.

Contact a mental health professional for additional guidance or information.

— Take Charge of Your Health —



Reduce Your Caffeine Intake



Caffeine can offer real benefits, including sharper focus, improved alertness and better athletic performance. However, consuming too much can lead to anxiety, disrupted sleep, digestive discomfort, increased heart rate and dependency. Cutting back rather than quitting cold turkey can help you avoid withdrawal symptoms like headaches and fatigue while still lowering your overall intake.

Consider the following guidance for reducing your caffeine intake:

- **Cut back gradually.** Reduce your intake in small increments, such as brewing a slightly weaker cup or swapping one caffeinated drink per day for a decaffeinated option. This approach can help minimize withdrawal symptoms like headaches, irritability and fatigue.
- **Track your daily intake.** Coffee isn't the only source of caffeine. It can also be in sparkling water, tea, soda, energy drinks, chocolate and some medications. Keeping a simple log for a few days can help you see your true intake and identify where to cut back first.
- **Watch the timing of your last cup.** Caffeine can stay in your system for six hours or longer. Avoid consuming it in the afternoon and evening to help protect your sleep quality.
- **Stay hydrated and keep blood sugar steady.** Drinking water throughout the day and eating regular, balanced meals can reduce fatigue and cravings that might otherwise tempt you to reach for caffeine.
- **Find substitutes that fit the habit, not just the drink.** If caffeine is tied to a routine, like a morning ritual or an afternoon break, replace it with herbal tea, caffeine-free sparkling water or a short walk so you keep the habit without the caffeine.

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Recipe of the Month

BBQ Chicken Pizza

Makes: 12 servings

Ingredients

- 6 whole-wheat English muffins
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup barbecue sauce
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chicken breast, skinless (cooked, cut up)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 bell pepper (chopped)

Preparations

1. Heat oven to 450 F.
2. Slice the English muffins in half and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Spread the barbecue sauce on the English muffins to within $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of the edges.
4. Top with the chicken, cheese and bell peppers.
5. Bake for 7 to 12 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	143
Total fat	4 g
Protein	10 g
Sodium	393 mg
Carbohydrate	19 g
Dietary fiber	2 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total sugars	8 g

Source: MyPlate