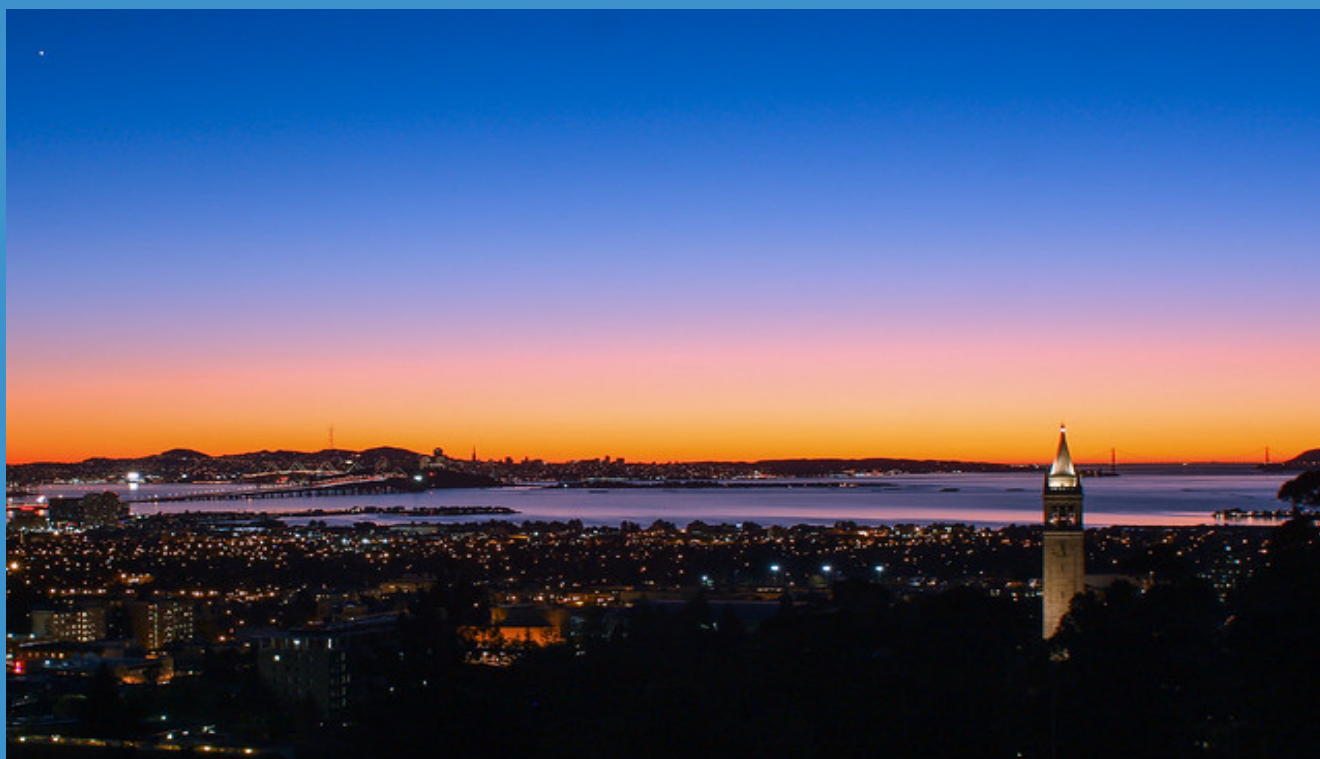


# UC BERKELEY SLEEP TEAM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020



## PAGE 2

### RESEARCH UPDATES

See the latest updates from our research team about our study's progress.

## PAGE 2

### RELAXATION EXERCISE

Try out an evidence-based exercise for falling asleep more easily! Progressive muscle relaxation helps relax the mind and body.

## PAGE 3

### SLEEP AND COVID-19

Wondering why your sleep seems to be off these days? Read on for insight into how your sleep may be impacted by world events, and what to do about it.

## Clinical Supervision Calls Starting Soon!

Supervision calls are a chance for you to connect with a community of practitioners who are passionate about sleep, get answers to sleep-related questions, and consult on client cases. Keep an eye on your inbox for more updates.

Starting week of 05/04



BLOPER

*"You can't sleep? Have you tried meditating, then reading for an hour, then going to the couch, then back to bed, then counting backward from ten million, then taking a sleeping pill?"*

## RESEARCH UPDATES

IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS WE HAVE...

- Partnered with **9 counties** across California
- Held **5 trainings** with **88+** providers
- Welcomed **38+** new Sleep Therapists
- Had **16 new clients** referred, and counting!

THANK YOU FOR BEING A VALUABLE  
PART OF OUR TEAM!

**All of our  
trainings and  
sleep therapy  
sessions have  
gone remote!**

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE

TRY RIGHT BEFORE BED; TAKES 5-10 MINUTES

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable, relaxed position. Close your eyes or lower them towards the ground.
2. Starting with your toes, and moving slowly up your body, tense each group of muscles one at a time (for example, toes, then feet, then calves, etc). As you tense them, breathe in and count to 3.
3. Breathe out as you release each group of muscles. Take a moment to appreciate what it feels like when they are relaxed.
4. After you're done, breathe in and out slowly and enjoy the relaxation.

It's a skill to be able to relax ourselves even when we feel stressed. Keep practicing!

***"Smile, breathe, and go slowly." -Thich Nhat Hanh***



## COVID-19 AND YOUR SLEEP

Sleep often goes out the window in a crisis. And yet, good sleep is your best superpower right now. It boosts the immune system, helps you cope with stress, and improves mental health. Read on for tips and tricks...

# SLEEP HEALTH UNDER QUARANTINE

## WHY IS MY SLEEP OFF?

### LOSING ROUTINES

As our society has tried to adapt to the new normal, many of the routines and daily practices that we take for granted have been thrown off. Our bodies and our sleep depend on consistency in order to function well. Without these, our daily biological rhythms can go into freefall.

### ISOLATION AND LACK OF ACTIVITY

Our brains need enough stimulation during the day in order to help us sleep solidly at night. Studies have shown that physical and social activity during the day help us sleep more solidly at night. Without it, we can end up feeling sleepy and out of it all the time. If you've found yourself sleeping more than before quarantine, and still not feeling rested, this might apply to you.

### STRESS AND ANXIETY

Stress and anxiety are major culprits when it comes to any sleep issues. When we are stressed or anxious, our 'fight or flight' systems go into high gear. Stress hormones such as cortisol go up, your heart rate increases, your muscles tense, and blood flows away from the parts of your brain that help you make good, balanced decisions. All of these things make it very hard to sleep well.

### SCREEN TIME INSTEAD OF SUNLIGHT

All of the extra time we're spending indoors is limiting our exposure to natural light during the day. This will throw off our bodies' natural rhythms and can make it difficult to keep our nighttime rhythm.

## HOW GOOD SLEEP CAN HELP

### BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Sleep is one of the best ways to protect your health. During sleep, our bodies engage in cellular repair and boost the production of infection-fighting antibodies and cells, to name just a few things. Many studies have shown that when we get enough sleep we are less likely to get sick, and even if we do it's less severe, and we recover faster. So, think of sleep as an important natural immune defense!

## MENTAL HEALTH

Sleep is a critical protective factor against mental health problems like anxiety, depression, mania and paranoia. Without sleep, people may start experiencing worsening mental health symptoms, and even sometimes new ones they wouldn't have had with better rest. So, if you're worried about mental health right now, the best thing you can do is to protect your sleep.

## PROCESSING EMOTIONS

When we sleep, our minds help us to consolidate memories, process emotions, and make sense of what we have experienced in the world. Studies have shown that people who get better rest following traumatic events show fewer long-term symptoms of trauma. Even nightmares and strange dreams play a very important role in 'cleaning up' difficult emotions.

## GETTING BETTER SLEEP

We've talked about how good sleep is very important during a crisis, but how do we achieve it?

### BUILD ROUTINE

Consistent routines are critical for good sleep, even in the best of times.

- Pick consistent times to wake up and go to bed, and stick to them. Try to not vary these times by more than 30 minutes at most.
- Find other things to build routine around during the day. Examples include: taking a regular morning walk, eating meals at consistent times, or having phone check-in's with friends/ family.

### EXERCISE, LIGHT AND ACTIVITY

Increase your intake of light, exercise, and social activities as much as possible during daytime hours. This helps your circadian system know when it's time to be awake and time to be asleep.

- Try to get some kind of daily exercise. There are many online workout options, but even walking around for 30 minutes or doing some stretching will help.
- Watch out for your light intake. Limit your exposure to bright light, such as the light emitted from electronics, for 1-2 hours before bedtime. Try to get lots of bright, outdoor light during the day, and dim indoor lights at night.

### CONNECT

Find ways to connect with others (while staying socially distanced!). You could schedule phone or zoom calls, watch a tv program, look through old photos, listen to the radio, or write cards or letters.

### RELAX THE MIND

We can't control what happens in the world around us, but we can control our mindset and how we respond to it. Relaxation and good self-care take practice, just like any skill! Here are a few ideas:

- Try a mindfulness app such as Head Space, Calm, or Simple Habit. There are also many options for free guided meditations online.
- Use imagery: pick a place that you have gone in the past that felt safe and comforting to you. Close your eyes and bring it to life with your senses: what can you see, hear, smell, and feel?
- Try a progressive muscle relaxation exercise like the one on the previous page. This one is great as you're trying to fall asleep at night.
- Make a list of soothing, enjoyable activities to do when stressed. Examples might include: listening to music, cooking, taking a shower or bath, taking a walk, coloring, reading, etc.

We are deeply honored to be collaborating with you. Thank you all for the seen and unseen things you do to improve people's lives. We look forward to sharing another sleep newsletter soon!