



TURNING OFF SCREENS BEFORE BEDTIME

This strategy is suggested in the 11-14 BrainWaves lessons: **Sleep, screens and mood** and **Protecting your wellbeing in a world of screens**.

About the strategy

Artificial light prior to sleep can disrupt the circadian rhythm because it reduces the body's release of melatonin, the hormone that makes you feel sleepy. Night-time use of screens - including use of mobile phones, television watching, and playing video games - is shown to reduce both sleep duration and quality. Avoiding screens for 60 to 90 minutes before going to sleep can allow your body to release melatonin, help you feel calm and relaxed, and improve your sleep. For young people, this strategy can be summarised as '**One before sleep time, finish up your screen time**'.

The scientific evidence behind the strategy

Research consistently shows a correlation between night-time screen-based media devices use and poor sleep in adolescents, and is associated with poorer health-related quality of life. The research highlights the impact and importance of night-time screen use on sleep duration and quality in adolescents, and the impact of changes to circadian rhythm on cognition, academic performance, and mental health.

- Mireku, M. et al. (2019) *Night-time screen-based media device use and adolescents' sleep and health-related quality of life*. Environmental International, 124, 66-78, DOI: 10.1016/j.envint.2018.11.069

Further reading on reducing artificial light prior to sleep

Harvard Health Publishing has an interesting article on the effect blue light has on your sleep: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blue-light-has-a-dark-side>

The Mental Health Foundation's 'Ten Tips for a Good Night's Sleep':

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/articles/ten-top-tips-good-sleep>

Smiling Mind's '5 Steps To A Better Night's Sleep':

<https://blog.smilingmind.com.au/5-steps-to-a-better-nights-sleep>