

- Seasons / Temperature / Lighting

Why the change in season is affecting how you sleep

Grimsby Telegraph · 5 Mar 2024 · 19 · BY ABI JACKSON

Daffodils are in bloom, days are feeling longer and brighter (as are our moods) – there's a lot to celebrate when spring approaches. But if you've noticed you're struggling to drift off or stirring a lot more during the night, it's probably no coincidence.



A change in season often means a shift in energy too, and the transition from winter to spring can affect our sleep.

“There are two things to bear in mind when thinking about your sleep as we head into spring: temperature and light,” says Hannah Shore, resident sleep expert at Silentnight. Both of these things are key to getting a good night of slumber, and even small changes can throw us a little off balance.

Warmer days and nights

“As the days get warmer, we all need to be aware of the effect increased temperatures will have on sleep quality,” says Hannah. It might still be pretty cold outside at the moment, but if you've been piling on extra thick bedding and pyjamas during the depths of winter, it might be time to start reducing those layers. If you do find yourself overheating during the night, Hannah suggests it's a good idea to factor this into your pre-bedtime routine too.

“Our core body temperature needs to drop a couple of degrees for us to get a good night's sleep, so anything that raises your core body temperature within your routine, such as exercise, hot baths and eating too close to bed time, will negatively affect you getting to sleep,” she notes.

More daylight

“Lighting has a big influence on our circadian rhythm – the driving force for sleep,” says Hannah. “You'll notice that bright mornings can suppress the production of melatonin [the ‘sleep hormone’], making us feel more awake. Dull lights in the evening prompt our bodies to produce sleep hormones, making it easier for us to fall asleep. “The wrong lighting could negatively impact your circadian rhythm and although artificial lights can help fix this, natural light is best. Consider going for a walk in the morning sun and in the evening opt for mood lighting – these small changes will help you to keep a consistent and healthy sleep schedule.”

Stephen Goknel, sleep guru and founder of Luff Sleep, adds: “As the sun starts to rise earlier as we go into spring, our sleep cycles and circadian rhythms also change, as the natural light decreases our bodies’ melatonin production, and we begin to wake up earlier naturally.”

Work with the shift

If you are very sensitive to light when trying to sleep, investing in black-out blinds or curtains, or wearing a sleep mask could help. Working with the seasonal shift, rather than battling against it or just hoping for the best, can also be beneficial – especially ahead of the clocks changing on March 31.

“Set your alarm for 15 minutes earlier. Getting your body used to a gradual change of time will be much better for your circadian rhythm (your natural body clock) than jolting back one whole hour suddenly,” says Stephen. “Get up and exercise outdoors, if the weather is OK, or in a room with lots of natural light if not. This will trigger the release of cortisol and make your body feel much more awake naturally. Decrease your caffeine intake over the afternoons, and get to bed 30 minutes earlier – this again will help your body adjust.”