

Impact of Late Night Phone Use on Sleep: A Contemporary Enigma

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DESCRIPTION

In today's world, smartphones are integral to our daily routines. Whether for work, socializing, entertainment, or information, we rely on our phones more than ever. However, the habit of using phones at night, especially when we're already feeling sleepy, has sparked concerns about its effects on sleep quality and overall health. With an overwhelming majority of people using their devices before bed, it's essential to understand the impact of nighttime phone use and how we can better manage our sleep environment. This article will explain the consequences of using phones in sleepy mode.

Allure of using phones before sleep

Why do we turn to our phones when we should be drifting off to sleep? The answer lies in how accessible and engaging our devices have become. Social media, messaging apps, videos, and games are all available at our fingertips, providing instant gratification. For many, the phone serves as a way to wind down after a long day, providing a few moments of distraction before falling asleep. Additionally, smartphones have become central to how we stay connected. Even as we prepare for bed, the pull of notifications-emails, texts, social media alerts-can be difficult to resist. These devices provide an endless stream of content that keeps our minds stimulated, even when our bodies are ready to rest. This form of stimulation might feel harmless, but the impacts can be significant. Research shows that nighttime phone use can interfere with the body's natural sleep rhythms, leading to poorer sleep quality, difficulty falling asleep, and even long-term health issues like insomnia.

Science behind sleep disruption

The use of smartphones before bedtime disrupts sleep in several key ways. One of the most well-known effects is the impact of blue light emitted from phone screens. Blue light mimics the natural light we experience during the day, signaling to our brains that it's time to stay awake. This suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for making us feel sleepy, thereby delaying the onset of sleep. Even with

many phones now featuring a night mode or blue light filter to reduce exposure to blue light, the problem persists. The engaging nature of the content we view-whether it's scrolling through social media, reading the news, or watching videos-keeps our brains active and alert. This mental stimulation can make it harder to relax and settle into sleep, even if we're physically tired. Moreover, studies have shown that individuals who use their phones in bed are more likely to suffer from fragmented sleep. Notifications, sudden alerts, or even the temptation to check the time can lead to multiple awakenings throughout the night. This interrupted sleep prevents the body from fully entering the deeper stages of sleep, which are necessary for physical and mental recovery.

Sleep and mental health

In addition to the physical effects, using your phone in sleepy mode can have serious implications for mental health. Poor sleep quality is closely linked to stress, anxiety, and depression. When we use our phones late into the night, we are more likely to experience sleep deprivation, which can exacerbate feelings of irritability, mood swings, and difficulty concentrating the next day. Social media, in particular, can be a double-edged sword when viewed at night. On one hand, it offers a form of connection and distraction, but on the other, it can provoke feelings of anxiety, comparison, and inadequacy. This is especially true if we encounter negative or stressful content. Scrolling through feeds before bed can also lead to the phenomenon known as doom scrolling, where we consume negative news or posts, further heightening stress before sleep.

Sleep mode trap: Cycle of dependence

Using phones in sleepy mode can also create a cycle of dependency. The more we use our phones before bed, the more likely we are to rely on them as a way to relax. Unfortunately, this habit can backfire. When sleep quality suffers due to using phone, we feel more tired during the day, leading us to use our phones even more at night to unwind. This cycle can be hard to break. Many people believe that a few minutes on their phone will help them fall asleep faster, but the reality is often the

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opposite. The stimulation from phone use makes it harder to fall asleep, and over time, our bodies begin to associate phone use with staying awake, making it even more difficult to establish healthy sleep patterns.

Strategies for reducing night time phone use

Breaking the habit of using your phone in bed isn't easy, but it's an important step toward improving your sleep and overall well-being. Here are some practical strategies to help reduce nighttime phone use:

Establish a digital curfew: Set a specific time each night when you will stop using your phone. Ideally, this should be at least 30 minutes to an hour before bed to give your mind time to wind down.

Create a bedtime routine: Replace phone use with relaxing activities that don't involve screens. Reading a book, meditating, or practicing gentle stretches can help signal to your brain that it's time to sleep.

Use night mode and dark mode features: While these features don't completely eliminate the impact of blue light, they can help reduce some of the strain on your eyes. If you must use your

phone, opt for apps that offer dark mode to minimize light exposure.

Remove phones from the bedroom: One of the most effective ways to stop using your phone in sleep mode is to keep it out of the bedroom entirely. Charge your phone in another room to remove the temptation to check it during the night.

Utilize sleep apps wisely: Some apps are designed to help improve sleep, such as guided meditations or white noise generators. If you use your phone as part of your bedtime routine, make sure it's for activities that promote relaxation rather than stimulation.

CONCLUSION

Using your phone in sleep mode may seem like a harmless habit, but it can have significant consequences on your sleep quality, mental health, and overall well-being. By understanding the impact of nighttime phone use and taking steps to reduce it, you can reclaim your sleep and wake up feeling more refreshed. Establishing healthier boundaries with technology, particularly at night, is key to creating a restful, restorative sleep environment in the digital age.