

Teen Health Matters

By Kennedy Krueger, Josie Rother, Jacqueline Stoner, and Kate Hendricks

Sleep

Everyone can remember dreading the idea of going to bed as a kid. Yet, once they reach adolescence, many students suddenly find themselves envying their childhood early bedtimes. With the addition of after-school jobs, increasingly difficult homework, and early morning practices, chronic sleep deprivation is often the only way students can stay on top of everything. 49% of Scotus students find themselves in this situation, reporting they receive less than the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep per night during the school week.

While it may be the norm, sleep deprivation is not healthy and can have serious effects in both the short and long term. It is essential students become aware of the importance of sleep and make changes to prioritize it in their lives.

The urge to stay up late and miss out on sleep is not entirely students' fault. According to senior Helene Chard, it can be a struggle to feel tired enough to fall asleep at night.

"My brain thinks it is time to bake, do schoolwork, or think up crazy stories at all hours of the night," Chard explained.

The National Sleep Foundation attributes this problem to changing circadian rhythms, or the body's internal clock that dictates times of alertness and drowsiness. During the teenage years, this clock shifts to later times, causing many students to feel wide awake late at night and unable to

focus early in the morning.

Many students are also forced into late nights due to activities, including freshman Vivienne Karges.

"Going from volleyball to one act to doing homework [at night] prevents me from getting enough sleep," Karges stated.

Of course, social media and other online activities can also keep students up longer than intended. It is easy to lose track of time while chatting with friends, scrolling, or playing video games, and logging off early often triggers the fear of missing out on important conversations or happenings.

Students may think losing a few hours of sleep each night is not a big deal, but studies have shown the effects of chronic sleep deprivation are not to be taken lightly. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports teenage sleep deprivation has been linked to an increased likelihood of obesity, diabetes, and injuries. It can also limit emotional regulation and control over behavior, causing a significant increase in mental health problems, risky or impulsive decisions, and an inability to focus or learn properly. Worst of all, according to the Child Mind Institute, close to 100,000 car accidents occur every year due to adolescents, and many result in fatalities.

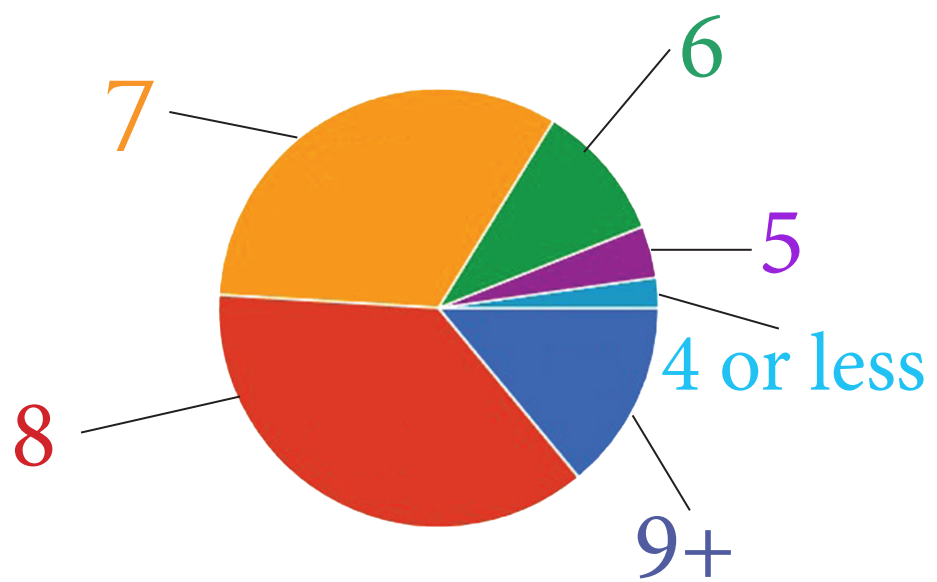
Thankfully, there are several ways students can increase their amount of sleep each night. For an easier

time falling asleep, students should turn their screens off one hour before bedtime to protect against stimulating blue light. Many phones allow users to create "downtime hours" where their access to certain apps turns off, which can be a helpful reminder each night. The Child Mind Institute also recommends students keep a regular sleep schedule instead of taking frequent naps or sleeping in late on the weekends. It may seem counter-cultural, but consistency is the best way to train the brain into sleeping and waking at earlier times than it normally would.

In order to get to sleep at a better time, students may need to consider quitting a few activities as well. It is better to be involved in only a few meaningful activities than to lose enjoyment for all of them due to constant sleep deprivation.

Getting less than 8-10 hours of sleep a night is not something for students to brag about; it can actually have serious consequences for both them and the people around them. So, it is time students took a page out of their parents' book and brought back early bedtimes once again.

How many hours of sleep do students get per night?



Social Media

Social media provides both benefits and conflicts in society. It provides an outlet for those to express their creativity and the opportunity to share it with others. Although this is great, social media can also jeopardize creativity and cause problems in social life. According to the website *Exploding Topics*, an average teen spends 7 hours and 22 minutes on screens each day.

Freshman Makynley Paitz uses Tiktok the most and thinks social media can take away from life but can be used for good as well.

"Sometimes I do think the amount of time I spend on social media is unhealthy because there is so much more to life than socials, and I think they can take a lot of time away from your life that could be spent enjoying the

life God gave you to live," Paitz said.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, teenagers' average screen time has increased by two hours each day. Many teenagers may have physical and mental problems from their technology usage. Excessive screen time can cause neck and back pain and even eye strain. People also experience anxiety or depression from the lack of face to face communication.

Senior Gigi Chilapa-Bello uses her phone for 3-5 hours a day.

"I say I use an alright amount of social media. I check up on all my DMs, limit my screen time so I don't doom scroll, send streaks if I remember, and post on my spam instagram account every now and then," Chilapa-Bello said. "As much as I would like to say it doesn't affect me, it does.

I hardly have any free time to do what I like to do, but the transition from activity to school to work, I go on my phone for a 'quick debrief' when in reality, that pushes me to procrastinate and distracts me."

According to the website *Aspen Valley Health*, on average, teenagers are online almost 9 hours a day, not including homework. Studies have shown that this generation has a shorter attention span than the more people use social media. Scotus students have felt this way as 47.1% believe they spend 3-5 hours on technology. Teenagers are also choosing their phones or devices instead of doing school work, which causes poor focus and academic performance in school.

Junior Trevor Niedbalski uses technology for less than an hour a day.

"I use no social media. No need to compare my life to others. Delete all social media for a month; you won't miss anything, I promise. Sometimes, it has a strong drawing power that often sucks people in getting in the way of how people spend their time. Time in the chapel is the number 1 factor. Second is self mastery, not becoming a slave of my phone as the majority of society is," Niedbalski said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours of screen time per day for children and teenagers. To lower screen time, you can set app limits and turn off notifications so you are not tempted to check your phone. Also, try to replace screen time with alternate activities, such as exercising or doing hobbies you enjoy.

Students' most used apps



Instagram - 12.4%



Snapchat - 8.9%



TikTok - 30.6%



YouTube - 10.8%

Tips and Tricks for Overall Wellness



Sleep

- Turn off devices 1 hour before bed
- Keep a regular sleep schedule
- Consider quitting a few activities



Social Media

- Set app limits
- Turn off notifications
- Replace screen time with alternate activities

Students strive for healthy habits

By: Jacqueline Stoner, Kate Hendricks, Kennedy Kruger, and Josie Rother

Stress

There are only so many hours in a day, and involved students are filling their schedules to the brim. Clubs, organizations, and sports seem to be taking over high school students' lives. These activities are only adding to the mountain of stress students are suffering from due to homework and lack of sleep.

"[Activities affect my personal life and overall health because I] get home at a late time and do not get enough sleep or do not have enough time to do my homework," seventh grade student Kai Ramaekers said.

Some students think they benefit by staying active and making connections, while some feel they have no more free time to spend time with friends and family. Others might feel a little bit of both sides.

"The pros of participating in sports are that you will get stronger and healthier. The cons are many sports can be everyday, and practices can last up to a long time. This contributes to less family and free time," eighth grade student Dreya Fiala said.

The reason why students are overwhelming themselves with activities might actually be a result of the expectation to improve their resume.

While it is true students should be involved, too much can cause burnout. According to *Research.com*, 33% of teenagers believe they were pressured to have extracurricular activities.

Students want to make themselves look the best they can for colleges, but their GPAs may be suffering for this.

"Sometimes I feel like I am falling behind in classes, and I can't hang out with my friends all the time," freshman student Molly Eickmeier said.

The students who are successfully

maintaining grades while excelling in extracurriculars may not be getting the amount of sleep they need. According to *Research.com*, the CDC reported 34% of kids ages 6 to 14 did not get enough sleep. Moreover, 77% of high school

students lacked sleep. They may be waking up early most mornings for meetings and staying up late to complete assignments, resulting in stress and exhaustion.

"[Something preventing me from getting enough sleep is] having to do

homework and studying for tests after a long sports practice and then getting up early for a meeting for the various things I'm involved in," junior student Brooke Krienke said.

One solution to this problem is time management. There are several ways busy teens can approach this. For some, all they need is a simple to do list to make sure everything can get done before relaxing. Another way to stay organized is to use a planner. Students often think they can remember what homework they have, but they would be saving brain space by simply writing it down. Using study halls wisely is also a huge time saver for those who are busy with after-school activities.

This may not be the perfect solution for everyone. Some students are always busy, and when they finally get home, it is already way past their bedtime. The only way to solve this problem could be to take a break. Some high school students are involved in so much, and it is difficult to do all of their activities while still excelling in school. Something may have to be sacrificed, and it is up to students to choose what is important to them.

Study Habits

There are many components in a high school student's day, but a major one is their schoolwork. Scotus Journalism conducted a survey where 80% of students at Scotus reported studying 0-40 minutes a night, with 11% studying more than 1 hour a night. Studying is an important life skill, and with the right techniques and habits, it is a stress free skill.

At Scotus, out of 277 responses, 56% of students feel they have healthy study habits, regularly study, and stay organized. There are many factors to leading a healthy schoolwork balance in life, such as organization, time management, and study techniques.

However, there were also 43% of students who did not feel their study habits were healthy. Factors include procrastination, lack of studying, and low motivation. Besides those universal factors, there are other impacts more specific to each student. Many are involved in 2 or more activities, have a busy home life, work jobs, do chores, volunteer, and have their own personal hobbies.

Senior Max Beshaler feels his study habits are not healthy.

"Procrastinating [affects my study habits the most] because I find studying monotonous and boring, and I never want to do it," Beshaler said. "I almost never study at night, and most of my studying happens the day of the test, often only a few periods before."

Organization makes a huge impact on lessening stress when busy with homework and activities. Ways a student can be organized are by keeping a

planner, separating homework by subjects, time blocking, and keeping to-do lists. All of these methods are used to help busy students keep track of their assignments and extracurricular activities. Not every student utilizes them, however; out of the 313 Scotus students who responded to a survey, 55% claimed to keep a planner, and 29% used to-do lists.

A study was conducted by students at the University of Princeton to target the effectiveness of organiza-

tion. *The effect of workspace tidiness on schoolwork performance of high school students* by Charlotte Annes, Jordan Taylor, and Robert Hallock found organization cannot only cause stress but affect efficiency and focus on school work. Meaning, the more organized a person is, the higher the chance they have of scoring well on homework and exams.

According to the results, "85% of the students reported that the disorganized environment was more stressful

than the organized environment, and 89% reported feeling more focused in the organized workspace."

Being organized, time blocking, and using study techniques positively impacts student wellbeing and study habits. Time blocking goes along with organization but goes into more specifically time. There are only 24 hours in a day; 8-9 of them are spent sleeping, 8 are at school or work and, 2 hours are basic necessities such as eating, showering and getting dressed. When added up, that is 19/24 hours spent, which only guarantees 5 hours of free time. In that free, time many students are involved in activities or jobs.

This is where time blocking and study techniques can be extremely beneficial. Students can map out every hour, or even down to the minute, of their day. When students know when and how they are going to study, it allows them to relax and conquer one task at a time.

Students can schedule time to study into their day and then plan out how they are going to study. Ways to study include flashcards, quizlets, using a whiteboard, teaching the material to a peer, or making a diagram.

Building good study habits is not easy; it takes time and hard work. It takes one day at a time to become a better student, which makes an overall better person.



Tips and Tricks for Overall Wellness

Stress

- Practice time management
- Use a to do list or planner
- Use your study halls wisely



Study Habits

- Set specific goals
- Set up a designated study space
- Get an accountability/study partner

