Sleep Ninja®

Train and become a sleep
master with Sleep Ninja®

Scan the code to visit
the Sleep Ninja® website

What's Sleep Ninja®?

Black Dog Institute developed Sleep Ninja®, the first adolescent-focused app which helps young people improve their sleep.

Based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), across six 'training sessions', Sleep Ninja® teaches strategies to develop healthy sleep habits and improve sleep quality.

The 'choose your own adventure' style chat function allows young people to learn about sleep in a fun, interactive way under the guidance of the Master 'Sleep Ninja®'.

Users of the app are awarded with 'belts' on completion of the training sessions with the ultimate goal of receiving a black belt in sleep.

The app also features:

> A sleep tracking function.

> Recommended bedtimes based on sleep guidelines

> Reminders to start a wind down routine each night.

> Clinician-guided relaxation audio to help prepare the mind and body for sleep.

> A series of sleep tips and general information about sleep.

How does it work?

Developed in consultation with young people and their parents, Sleep Ninja® is designed for use during the day, not at bedtime.

The app:

> Educates young people about the importance and role of sleep.

> Helps them become aware of any habits contributing to poor sleep (e.g. sleep environment, daytime routine, bedtime routine).

> Teaches both behavioural and cognitive strategies to change their unhelpful sleep patterns.

Who's it for?

This app is suitable for young people aged 12–16 years who are experiencing mild to moderate sleep difficulties such as difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, poor sleep quality, or not getting enough sleep.

If sleep disturbance is causing significant distress or is impacting school, work or other important areas of life, we recommend that they talk to a trusted adult or see a doctor.

The problem of sleep disturbance

Sleep disturbance refers to difficulty getting enough good quality sleep, at the appropriate times.

Up to 40% of young people experience some form of sleep disturbance, with most not getting the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep per night (particularly on school nights).

Insomnia, which is the difficulty initiating and maintaining sleep such that it has a negative impact on daytime activities effects around 10% of young people, with many more experiencing some insomnia symptoms.

These sleep difficulties have an adverse impact on all aspects of a young person's life, including their mental health.

Benefits for young people

Research shows that using Sleep Ninja can reduce sleep disturbances among young people. Depression and anxiety symptoms have also been shown to reduce after using the app.4

Sleep is important for general physical health and wellbeing.

Sleep can help with:

> Growth.
> Restoring energy.
> Repairing injuries or illness.
> Psychological wellbeing and mood.
> Getting along with others.
> Concentration, memory, school performance.

Not getting enough sleep can lead to:

> Having trouble paying attention, concentrating, learning and solving problems.
> Doing poorly at school, impairment in sports performance or other hobbies, too little energy to spend quality time with friends or family.
> Increased risk of injury.
> Increased risk of mental health problems.
> Increased risk of physical health problems.
> Irritability, aggression, difficulty dealing with stress, outbursts towards friends or family.

What's the committment?

Users level up and reach their next 'belt' by completing one training session and tracking their sleep for three nights (out of a 7-night period). Therefore, it takes approximately 6 weeks to complete the Sleep Ninja program (6 training sessions/ modules).

In a typical week, the user:

> Completes a training session
  (takes about 5-10 minutes to complete).
> Puts into practice what they are learning.
> Unlocks the next level by tracking their sleep for a minimum of three nights to encourage a healthy sleep routine.
> Uses the optional functions e.g. relaxation audio and reminders to wind down.

How do I access Sleep Ninja®?

> The Sleep Ninja® app is available on the App Store and Google Play.
> We are currently taking expressions of interest from mental health professionals who would like to be delivery partners in supporting this program during 2023.
> For more information about Sleep Ninja®, and how to get this app out to young people, please send your expression of interest to
  sleep@blackdog.org.au

For more information
Scan the QR code to visit the Sleep Ninja website
https://qrco.de/SleepNinja

1. American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.).

2. Ohayon, M.M., et al. (2000). Prevalence and patterns of problematic sleep among older adolescents. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 39, 1594-1556. https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-200012000-00019

3. Twenge, J. M., et al. (2019). Age, period, and cohort trends in mood disorder indicators and suicide-related outcomes in a nationally representative dataset. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 128(3), 2005–2017. https://doi.org/10.1037/abn0000410

4. Werner-Seidler, A, et al. The Effects of a Sleep-Focused Smartphone Application on Insomnia and Depressive Symptoms: A Randomised Controlled Trial and Mediation Analysis. J Child Psychol Psychiatry. 2023. DOI: 10.1111/jcpp.13795.

5. Gulliver, A., et al. (2010). Perceived barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking in young people: a systematic review. BMC Psychiatry, 10 (113). http://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-10-113

More information

Visit | qrco.de/SleepNinja
Contact | sleep@blackdog.org.au