

# Why Am I So Tired in the Mornings?

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Whose fault is it that students are falling asleep in class and missing instruction? This topic can be more complex than what is seen at surface level as many different issues in a teenager's life can contribute to their lack of sleep. Although, there is a general answer to the question: is the amount of sleep high school students are getting enough? And when we find the root of the issue, is there a way for us high school students to keep up with sleep?

A common issue almost all teens can relate to is the nightmare of waking up in the



morning. You periodically turn off your alarms..6:40..snoozed..6:42..snoozed..6:44..snoozed... and finally, after turning off every 2 minute alarm you have, you decide to get up. (Fun fact: snoozing your alarm in the morning is actually bad for you and can make you more tired. Is that fact going to make anyone reading this rethink snoozing their alarm in the morning? No. But it's just something to think about.) You're so tired, but why?

Exhaustion can stem from your insufficient amount of rest in the night, either due to your internal clock or pile of homework that kept you up until 1 a.m. Your internal clock develops at

about 6 months old, and puberty can cause this clock to change from a strict 8 p.m. to a shaky 12 a.m. According to UCLA Health, puberty shifts your clock a couple hours later and in some cases leads to sleep phase delay. Sleep phase delay is caused by genetics, lack of sunlight, and too much light at night. This accounts for about 16% of teenagers, but what about the other percentage who are struggling to get up in the morning?

Researchers at the University of Munich actually discovered that teenagers have a different sense of time. During teen years, you are more and more likely to stay up later and later, reaching the latest at 20. After then, you are expected to wake up at increasingly "more reasonable" times (which means *not* having breakfast at 1 p.m.). So if you're tired in the morning and are falling asleep in class, it isn't necessarily your fault.

School conflicts with the schedule of weekends, in which you're usually allowed to sleep in. This constant change of waking up at 6 a.m. to waking up at 1 p.m. is not good for keeping a strict wake-up/bedtime schedule. This brings up the question of whether or not schools should begin changing the traditional starting time for older students. Unfortunately, despite the positive effects of later school start times, it could clash with parents schedules, thus making it difficult to make any reform. Instead, (although these aren't the desired solutions), there are some ways in which you can make yourself a little less miserable in the mornings:

- Try not to take long naps
- Don't press the snooze button
- Decrease caffeine intake after 3 p.m.
- Practice gradually changing that 1 a.m. bedtime to a 12 a.m. rest (and so on)
- Avoid large meals before sleeping
- Go to bed whenever you feel tired (if possible)

There is not any 100% guaranteed way to avoid being completely exhausted, but there are small steps you can take to ensure less bleak mornings.