# The rise of sleepmaxxing: Optimising sleep quality in the age of social media



The increasing focus on sleep health has given rise to a new trend on social media, particularly among young adults, labelled as "sleepmaxxing." Coined on platforms like TikTok, sleepmaxxing encapsulates various methods and hacks purported to enhance sleep quality through unconventional means.

The term draws inspiration from the earlier concept of looksmaxxing, advocating for optimising one's appearance. Sleepmaxxing includes an array of practices ranging from taping one’s mouth shut to encourage nasal breathing, using nasal dilators, and incorporating supplements like magnesium and melatonin into one’s routine. These practices promote claims that certain strategies boost melatonin production, often linked to the use of red lights rather than regular lighting in bedrooms—a claim that notably benefits businesses selling these sleep-enhancing technologies.

As the popularity of wearable technology grows, so does the trend of monitoring sleep patterns via devices designed to track sleep efficiency and phases. The accuracy of these consumer-grade devices varies significantly, according to Melinda Jackson, an associate professor at Monash University. She states, “Most consumer-grade sleep tracking devices are better at estimating total sleep time than accurately distinguishing between light and deep sleep.”

The phenomenon of sleep-related anxiety has also emerged, often referred to by researchers as "orthosomnia," which arises from excessive reliance on sleep-tracking technologies. According to Professor Fatima Yaqoot, an epidemiologist and sleep scientist at the University of the Sunshine Coast, “relying too much on a ‘perfect sleep score’ or fixating on achieving an ideal number may lead to sleep-related anxiety and worsen the overall sleep experience.” She emphasises the importance of subjective experience, stating, “The best measure of sleep quality is how you feel upon waking. If you wake up feeling rested and refreshed, that means you slept well”—regardless of the readings from a tracking device.

Among the most discussed methods within sleepmaxxing is the practice of mouth taping, which Jackson explains could potentially lead to negative health outcomes, particularly for those who suffer from sleep apnoea. She also mentions, “Some of the concerns raised on social media with mouth breathing have been around poor oral health, increasing risk of infection, and poor sleep.” While nasal dilators may have benefits for some, their efficacy is primarily dependent on the individual's natural breathing habits.

The use of melatonin supplements has been a topic of debate. While these supplements are regarded as useful for resetting the body's internal clock—particularly for those experiencing jet lag or working shifts—Yaqoot advises caution: “Melatonin use is considered safe for the short term... long-term use needs more evidence.” Jackson concurs, cautioning that supplementing melatonin in individuals without diagnosed sleep disorders may not yield significant benefits.

Experts offer several recommendations for achieving better sleep quality based on behavioural changes. Yaqoot suggests beginning the day with sun exposure to align the body's internal clock, maintaining consistent sleep and wake times, limiting afternoon naps, reducing caffeine intake in the evening, avoiding heavy meals before bedtime, and establishing a calming pre-bedtime routine, which may include activities such as reading or meditation. It is also advised to steer clear of “bed rotting,” a term indicating the habit of spending excessive time awake in bed, which can weaken the brain's association between bed and sleep.

While behavioural modifications can greatly improve sleep quality, Yaqoot warns that underlying conditions such as insomnia or sleep apnoea necessitate professional intervention. If one finds themselves falling asleep in under five minutes, Jackson notes that it could indicate sleep deprivation—a condition to be addressed with appropriate care.

The trend of sleepmaxxing reflects not only a cultural fixation on optimising personal health and wellness but also raises questions about the efficacy of the myriad strategies being proliferated online.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.wellandgood.com/health/sleepmaxxing-tiktok-sleep-trend-explained> - This article explains the concept of sleepmaxxing, including its various practices and the role of social media in popularizing it. It also discusses the potential benefits and drawbacks of this trend.
* <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/sleepmaxxing-tiktok-trend> - This article provides insights into the sleepmaxxing trend, highlighting both effective and ineffective strategies for improving sleep quality. It emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between evidence-based methods and those lacking scientific support.
* <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/should-you-be-sleepmaxxing-to-boost-health-and-happiness-202503063090> - This article delves into the specifics of sleepmaxxing strategies, such as mouth taping and melatonin use, and discusses the lack of scientific evidence supporting some of these methods. It also touches on the broader context of sleep hygiene.
* <https://www.wellandgood.com/health/sleepmaxxing-tiktok-sleep-trend-explained> - The article mentions the phenomenon of orthosomnia, which is linked to excessive reliance on sleep-tracking technologies. This aligns with concerns about sleep-related anxiety due to the pursuit of 'perfect sleep.'
* <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/sleepmaxxing-tiktok-trend> - This article discusses the role of wearable technology in tracking sleep patterns and the varying accuracy of consumer-grade devices. It highlights the importance of understanding the limitations of these devices.