

Brits get more sleep while Germans faster out of bed

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Time to get up yet?

(Medical Xpress) -- A survey of the nation's sleeping and waking patterns has revealed that on average, we get over 7 hours sleep a night. But we spend 20 minutes in bed after the alarm has gone off while Germans get up more swiftly.

The [national survey](#) found that UK adults sleep on average for 7 hours, 21.5 minutes every night.

On work days, 72.6% of British people use an [alarm clock](#) to wake up, and once awake stay in bed for 20 minutes. Work starts at a mean time of 8.50am (with a peak start at 9am).

At weekends or on free days, only 12.5% of us use an alarm clock to wake up.

The survey was carried out by Professor Russell Foster of the University of Oxford and Professor Dr Till Roenneberg from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. Both are experts in chronobiology – the study of the body clock, or the circadian rhythms which govern our waking and sleeping patterns.

In April, they asked the British public to contribute to an international survey looking at the quantity – and quality – of sleep amongst the population. Almost 5,500 Brits completed the survey, which will be discussed today at The Times Cheltenham Science Festival.

Professor Roenneberg then compared these British results to 5,463 German respondents (matched by age and sex) randomly extracted from a database of the sleeping patterns of 70,000 Germans.

He found that [Germans](#) slept 8.5 minutes less each night than the British respondents, and the Brits also stayed in bed five minutes longer once the alarm had gone off.

Russell Foster, head of the Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology at Oxford University and chair of The Times Cheltenham Science Festival, said: 'It appears that the UK population and their German counterparts have much the same sleeping and waking patterns.

'On comparing the average British and German "chronotype," there was absolutely no difference. The German and UK graphs describing

chronotype could be laid on top of each other. The [survey](#) shows that the mean chronotype (mid-sleep time on free days) differed by half a minute and was 4.25am.'

Professor Dr Till Roenneberg, head of the Munich Centre of Chronobiology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, said: 'When I compared the sleep patterns of the UK respondents with their German counterparts the main difference was in their experience of social jet lag. Social jet lag is the discrepancy between what our body clock wants us to do and what our social [clock](#) wants us to do. It is much smaller for Brits, by more than 30 minutes, which means that the working day starting at 8.50am (compared to the German work day starting at 8.20am on average) better suits the sleep needs of the UK population.'

Professor Foster and Professor Roenneberg will be talking about the regenerative power of [sleep](#) tonight at The Times Cheltenham Science Festival.

Provided by Oxford University

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