

# Sleep disorders specialist warns of misleading takeaway from study suggesting snooze button benefits

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A study out of Sweden's Stockholm University suggests [hitting the snooze button](#) on the alarm clock might not be as bad a habit as we may have been led to believe.

The researchers say their analysis of 31 people who spent several nights in sleep lab concludes that using the snooze function for a more gradual wake up does not impact [sleep quality](#), and in some cases may help spark alertness sooner in the morning.

On average, the participants who hit snooze over the course of a half hour ended up with six less minutes of sleep.

But at UConn Health's Sleep Disorders Center, Dr. Jennifer Kanaan says the study, and the way it's being presented, could send the wrong message.

"If you're coming in and out of sleep for 30 minutes, after the [alarm](#) goes off the first time, you're costing yourself 30 minutes of uninterrupted, quality, restorative sleep," Kanaan says. "This study doesn't change that fact."

She was not involved in the Stockholm University study.

Kanaan suggests rather than try to figure out how to manipulate our alarm clocks to trick ourselves into thinking we're ready to wake up, we should make a consistent good night's sleep a greater priority. That would make us less reliant on snooze buttons, or alarm clocks in general.

"The other way to look at the study is that people are undersleeping and are suffering from insufficient sleep," she says. "Simply put, instead of hitting the snooze button they should get more sleep."

But when the alarm does go off before your body is ready to wake up on

its own, Kanaan suggests rather than hitting snooze, get out of bed instead and expose yourself to light. Sunlight is the most effective at resetting your body clock and recalibrating your circadian rhythm to put yourself in wake mode.

The return to standard time Nov. 5 presents a fortunately timed opportunity to improve our sleep habits.

"In addition to getting that extra hour of sleep that Saturday night, we can take advantage of the time change to realign our sleep schedule with the environmental light cues that setting our clocks back an hour provides," Kanaan says.

Here are 10 more tips for good sleep habits throughout the year:

1. Establish a nightly routine and consistent bedtime every night, even on weekends.
2. Avoid screens at least 60 minutes before that bedtime, and charge your phone somewhere other than the bedroom.
3. As part of your evening routine, chose relaxing activities rather than stressful ones.
4. Wake up at around the same time every morning, even on weekends. You eventually may be able to throw away your [alarm clock](#)!
5. Avoid naps and sleeping late, even when it's been a late night. This can push the next night's sleep back and make it even more difficult to get back on a consistent sleep schedule.
6. Reserve your bedroom for sleep; make it a quiet, dark, comfortable (not too warm) place that's free of distractions.
7. Watch your afternoon caffeine intake; the stimulative effect can last up to six hours.
8. Go easy on the alcohol. It might make it easier to fall asleep but harder to maintain quality sleep throughout the night.

9. Be aware that strenuous exercise at night or late heavy meals and snacks can make it harder to get to sleep.
10. Set a good example for your children; let your behavior reinforce the importance of sleep in your home.

Provided by University of Connecticut

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