Wake up, it's time to go to school again

Hi Alice,

As we begin to think about the next school year, I was wondering about what advice you have about adjusting from the summer late nights, late mornings back to VERY early mornings? Please give me any tips or tricks you may know to help ease the adjustment for thousands of kids across the country with the trauma of going back to school. Thank you.

D

Answer

Dear D,

After a summer of late nights and late mornings, it may seem difficult to stomach the harsh buzz of the alarm clock waking you up for early morning class. However, there are a couple of ways to adjust to a change in your morning schedule. Sleep experts would suggest:

1. Gradually start going to bed and waking up earlier and earlier during the weeks leading up to the resumption of classes?this can allow the body to adjust to leaving the mattress a little bit earlier.

2. Try to put yourself down at about the same time each night, and rise at the same time each morning. This seems to get one's body, mind, and whatever else into a less shocking and more automatic routine. This more disciplined approach to sleep may also deliver more energy during the day.

Although these suggestions may seem like common sense, there are no real "tricks" to getting up earlier. Usually it takes some time to become used to an earlier morning routine so a set schedule and plenty of rest can help the body adjust. It's normal to feel a little off while your body is adjusting. But if you're going to bed and getting up at the same time regularly, and getting enough sleep (six to ten hours for most college students), your new pattern should feel normal soon. If you're still having trouble getting up or feel tired during the day after a few weeks on your new schedule, you may want to see a health provider to rule out the possibility of a sleep disorder.

As for tips: You can try implementing a relaxing nighttime routine to help you get to sleep earlier. You can also try preparing for your day the night before so you don't have to rush around in the morning. Once you get out of bed in the morning, you might try grabbing some breakfast, some light exercise, or even listening to music to wake you up before you get to
school. If it's at all possible to schedule an interesting first class or two, you might even just leap out of bed with eager anticipation.

Rise and shine!

Alice!

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