

4 Stages of Sleep (NREM and REM Sleep Cycles)

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You are wrong if you think sleep is a passive. In fact, sleep is a very active state.

Two Main Types of Sleep

Types	Features
Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) Sleep	It occurs during the first 90 minutes. It restores the physical body. It releases growth hormones. It stimulates the immune system to defend against infections.
Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Sleep	It occurs after REM sleep. It restores the brain. It captures memories which allow learning to process.

Stages of Sleep

Phase	Features
Stage 1 (light sleep)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It lasts around 10 minutes.• You are in a state of calmness.• You drift in and out of sleep and can be awoken easily.• The eyes move slowly and muscle activity slows down.• People will experience sudden muscle contractions called hypnic myoclonia, which is followed by a sensation of falling
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It lasts around 30 to 45 minutes.• Your movement drops.• You become oblivious to your surroundings.• Eye movement stops.• Brain waves become slower with only an occasional burst of rapid brain waves called 'sleep spindles' .

Stage 3
(deep
sleep)

- It is only very brief.
- It is a transitional period between light and deep sleep, this is the time when slow brain waves begin called delta waves.

Stage 4
(deep
sleep)

- It lasts for approximately 30 minutes
- It is a state of complete relaxation.
- There is no eye movement or muscle activity.

REM(Rapid Eye Movement)

- It usually occurs about 70 to 90 minutes after we fall asleep
- Breathing becomes more rapid, irregular and shallow, eyes jerk rapidly and limb muscles become temporarily paralyzed.
- The brain waves are increased to levels usually seen when a person is awake.
- Dreams are most likely to occur.
- Most people experience REM sleep three to five intervals a night.
- Infants spend almost 50% of their time in REM sleep.
- Adults spend nearly half of sleep time in stage 2, 20% in REM, 10% in stage 1, 10% in stage 3, and 10% in stage 4.
- Older adults spend progressively less time in REM sleep.

The complete cycle from stage 1 through to REM can last roughly 90 to 110 minutes, and these cycles can occur multiple times throughout the average sleep. During an eight-hour rest period, a person will cycle through all the stages of sleep four or five times on average.
