



## HOMESCHOOLING HIGH SCHOOL WITH MEREDITH!

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### HOW LATE SHOULD TEENS SLEEP IN?

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"Wake up! You don't want to sleep the day away!" I chided the lump in my teenager's bed.

There was no response, only a muffled groan. My idea of morning and Shine's idea of morning are two completely different things. In Shine's world, to wake up too early in the morning leads to mourning! What should I do? Should I let her sleep in as late as she wants to? Or should I require her to rise when the rooster cocka-doodle-doo's?



When the sun wakes up, I want to wake up too. I get my best work done before ten o'clock. In contrast, my friend, Laura, is up in the wee hours of the morning doing her best creative work.

Like Ben Franklin, I believe that "Early to bed; early to rise; makes a teen healthy, wealthy, and wise!" There is something grand about rising early to start the day with a song in your heart. Why is it that teens seem to want to sleep the day away instead of rising up to accomplish exploits for the glory of God!

My children all have gone through the "hibernation stage," as I like to call it. The start of the season varies child to child but begins somewhere near the age of fourteen and continues on for several years. Katie Beth's lasted until about nineteen while Jenny Rose's season ended quickly and she often beat me awake in the morning when she was in high school. Julianna, at twenty-one, is still in the hibernation season, sleeping in as late as possible whenever possible. Shine's season is in full swing and Jimmy's is just beginning. So, you see, in our house, everyone goes through this season of sleeping in for some length of time during the teen years.

Is this phenomenon true only of my children. I can see you smiling right now. You, too, can share your own stories of the hibernation seasons that your teens have gone through or are in. In fact, in a non-scientific poll of homeschooled, high school students, 98% of those polled listed being able to sleep in as the very best thing about being homeschooled. This was closely followed by "having a close relationship with Mom & Dad," "Being able to study independently," and "being able to facebook in the middle of school, when I'm supposed to be writing a paper."

Why do teens love to sleep in? Well, the answer may surprise you! Teens need more sleep. It is a physical thing. In fact, the only time in your life you need more sleep is when you are a newborn baby. With all the physical, hormonal, and emotional upheaval going on in a teenager's body and mind, their bodies are simply exhausted. More sleep is required to rest and rejuvenate. I guess the education gurus who plan for teens in public school to start as early as 7:30 in some places have never studied human anatomy.

Yes, teens can stay up late. Some of my own teens want to stay up late when they reach puberty, but some of my teens have never been night owls, preferring to go to bed early. Yet, all have needed more hours of sleep per night than during elementary and pre-teen years.



You have several options to help your teens get the sleep they need.

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#### OPTION #1

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Teens can go to bed very early each evening...maybe as early as 8 p.m. This way they can still get up at 6 a.m., have their Quiet Times, clean their rooms, and be ready to start school at 8 a.m.

Possible problems: Who can get in bed by 8 p.m.? It never happens in our house!

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#### OPTION #2

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Teens can sleep in until they choose to wake up! They will like this option very much!

Possible problems: Developing bad patterns for the rest of their life, lack of discipline. They may sleep until the afternoon never getting any schoolwork finished, or working on school work until the wee hours of the morning. Also, if there are younger children, the younger children will enjoy waking them up...causing conflicts.

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#### OPTION #3

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Teens can have a later wake up time...say, 8 a.m. instead of 6 a.m. They can hop on their day early, but not as early, and take a nap, if needed, later in the day. Their day is still very disciplined and, yet, there is extra sleep time.

Possible problems: Teens may still feel like they need more sleep than this provides. In which case, use option #4, #5, or both!

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#### OPTION #4

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Let teens have one day a week where they can sleep in as late as they want to. (I cannot bear to let anyone sleep in past 10 a.m., so this is extremely hard for me! To sleep until ten is a rare luxury in my house!)

Possible Problems: May miss out on family fun!

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#### OPTION #5

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Keep a regular sleeping schedule that adds sleep hours to both ends: going to bed a little earlier and waking up a little bit later. Consistent sleep schedules work wonders for feeling alert, refreshed, and energetic...our bodies seem to thrive on consistency!

I would be very curious to hear from parents of teens and teens themselves about this issue! Have a lovely, restful week!