

# CALM & COZY

## Can weighted blankets improve sleep?

**Everyone has trouble sleeping** from time to time, but the cause can usually be attributed to temporary environmental factors like a stressful day, sleeping in a different bed while traveling, or eating a large meal before bedtime. However, ongoing sleep-related problems affect up to 70 million Americans. If you struggle with sleep, could a weighted blanket be the solution?

"Weighted blankets work and can definitely help," says Michelle Noel, DO, medical director of Kettering Health's Beaver View and Huber Heights sleep centers. "The weight of the blanket places pressure on your body, which can simulate a sensation of touch and increase the parasympathetic tone in your body, which is responsible for promoting relaxation and sleep."

While anyone can benefit from using a weighted blanket, weighted

blankets have been correlated with a calming effect and improved sleep for people with diagnosed medical conditions, including

- Anxiety
- Autism
- Dementia
- Depression
- Insomnia
- Daytime fatigue and sleepiness

"It is important to select a weighted blanket that is appropriate for your size," advises Dr. Noel. "A child should use a smaller, lighter-weight blanket (usually starting at three pounds), while adults can use larger blankets with heavier weights."

Before letting your child sleep with a weighted blanket, ask your pediatrician for recommendations on blanket weight and size. If you sleep with a partner, it comes down to personal preference whether to share one weighted blanket or to each use your own.

## **Treating insomnia without medication**

People with certain conditions such as diabetes, sleep apnea, or mobility issues could still benefit from using a weighted blanket but should consult their doctor before beginning use.

"Our goal is to try to treat insomnia without medication, and a weighted blanket is a great, drug-free tool to improve sleep," says Dr. Noel. "You can also promote healthier sleep by going to bed around the same time each night, making sure your sleep environment is cool and dark, and limiting the use of electronics like phones and television before going to bed."

It can take as long as four to six weeks to experience improved sleep through the use of a weighted blanket or other lifestyle adjustments. If you experience trouble with sleep for six weeks or longer, you might have a sleep condition that requires medical attention, and you should talk to your doctor.

**DON'T LOSE ANOTHER NIGHT'S SLEEP**

Visit [ketteringhealth.org/sleep](https://ketteringhealth.org/sleep) today to request an appointment with a sleep specialist.

