

Sleep Stages

Body & health

What happens in each sleep stage, and why waking wrong feels awful.

One cycle passes through these stages and repeats four to six times a night.

Stage	Share	What happens
N1 — light	~5%	Drifting off; easily woken
N2 — light	~45%	Heart rate and temperature fall
N3 — deep	~25%	Physical repair, immune function
REM	~25%	Dreaming, memory consolidation

Deep sleep dominates the first half of the night; REM dominates the second. Cutting sleep short costs mostly REM.