

Mission In Motion

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter
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Diet, Exercise and SLEEP

For years your doctor, your mom and your friend who goes to the gym multiple times a week have probably been telling you to eat better and exercise more. It's all you hear on television, in the newspapers and on talk radio. New doctors and dieticians usher in new diets, new fads, and so you've made some lifestyle changes – cutting back on your fat and sweets intake, and doing some cardiovascular exercise a few days a week. Despite all this, you still feel burned out, can't drop those extra pounds, and don't have the energy to greet each day with enthusiasm. What are you missing?

The third piece of the puzzle: SLEEP

Though the exact mechanisms of how sleep works, how sleep rejuvenates the body and mind is still mysterious, one thing sleep specialists and scientists do know is that adequate sleep is necessary for healthy functioning. Research shows that all mammals need sleep, and that sleep regulates mood and is related to learning and memory functions. Not only will getting your zzzs help you perform on a test, learn a new skill or help you stay on task, but it may also be a critical factor in your health, weight and energy level.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Tips for Sleeping Smart

- Establish a regular bed and wake time
- Avoid nicotine altogether and avoid caffeine close to bedtime
- Avoid alcohol
- Exercise regularly (but complete the workout at least 3 hours before bedtime)
- Establish a consistent relaxing "wind-down" bedtime routine
- Create a sleep-conductive environment that is dark, quiet and comfortable
- Discuss the appropriate way to take any sleep aid with a healthcare professional

Are you sleeping smart? For more information visit www.sleepingsmart.org.

Sleeping on the Job?

How you can stay awake

Do you feel like nodding off at work on a regular basis? If you are, the boss probably isn't giving you the nod since sleepiness at work can affect the quality and amount of work you complete. Facts show that there are many people who do get sleepy at work. A National Sleep Foundation study revealed that 51 percent of all U.S. workers report that sleepiness interferes with the amount of work they do*.

If you're always sleepy at work, you may have a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea, narcolepsy or insomnia. Symptoms of sleep apnea include stopping breathing many times throughout the night, loud snoring at night and when you nap and excessive daytime sleepiness. Narcolepsy is characterized by sudden, uncontrollable sleep attacks throughout the day. Those with insomnia have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep at night. Sleep disorders can lead to serious health problems, so if you think you may have one, see your doctor about treatment for the condition.

Give it a rest

What if you're sleepy at work and don't have a sleep disorder? Here are some eye-openers that can help keep you awake:

- Drink a caffeinated cup of coffee, tea or can of sugar-free soda to increase your level of alertness and improve your reaction time.
- Try an energy drink that contains caffeine and taurine, an amino acid that can increase mental functioning.

- Consider over-the-counter stimulants that contain caffeine and use them in moderation.
- Take a power nap for 15 to 20 minutes to boost productivity, making sure it's okay with your employer first.
- Move around by taking brisk five-minute walks to boost your mood and energy level.
- Wash your face with cold water and brush your teeth to feel more refreshed.

If you're still sleepy at work after trying these tips, you may be suffering from sleep debt—getting too little sleep at night. Try going to bed an hour earlier each night to see if your sleepiness at work improves.

When you find out what's making you sleepy on the job and get help, you can wake up and smell the coffee, and maybe drink a little less of it, too.

* Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

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If you don't snooze, you lose

The amount of sleep you get plays a major role in how you manage stress. The average adult needs seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Are you getting your 40 winks?

Stress is the number one cause of short-term sleeping difficulties. Try these tips and record your sleep activity in a sleep diary.

Go to bed and get up at the same time

Your brain and body need to balance sleep and wake time. Although it's tempting to sleep in on the weekends, a regular wake time in the morning strengthens your body and enhances sleep onset at night. So try not to vary your schedule often.

Set a regular bedtime routine

A relaxing, bedtime routine helps separate sleep time from active time. Try a hot bath, light reading or listening to soothing music.

Use your bedroom only for sleep

Remove televisions, computers and work materials from your room. Use your bed only for sleep and relaxation.

Create a comfortable, quiet, dark and cool environment

Your bedroom should entice you to sleep. Make certain that your mattresses and pillows are comfortable. Consider using blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, humidifiers and fans to help you achieve these effects.

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How Much Sleep Do You Really Need?

Age	Sleep Needs
Newborns (0-2 months)	12-18 hours
Infants (3 to 11 months)	14 to 15 hours
Toddlers (1-3 years)	12 to 14 hours
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	11 to 13 hours
School-age children (5-10 years)	10 to 11 hours
Teens (10-17)	8.5-9.25 hours
Adults	7-9 hours

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Myths and Facts:

Myth: Sleep is not important. I can just get by on a few hours.

Fact: Sleep is vital to our health and well-being, and is just as important as diet and exercise. Research shows that all mammals need sleep. Sleep regulates mood and is related to learning and memory functions. Not only will getting enough sleep help you learn a new skill, stay on task or be productive, it may also be a critical factor in your health, weight and energy level.

Although individual needs may vary, adults typically need between 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. It is difficult to make up for lost sleep because each time you don't get enough sleep, you add to your sleep debt (the accumulated sleep that is lost due to poor sleep habits, sickness, awakenings due to environmental factors or other causes.) As a result, the sleep debt may make you feel sleepier and less alert at times.

Many people follow an exercise program to stay healthy. It's important to have a smart sleep program as well.

Myth: Watching TV in my bedroom and working on my laptop in bed helps me wind down and fall asleep.

Fact: Doing work, watching TV and using the computer, both close to bedtime and especially in the bedroom, hinders quality sleep. Violent shows, news reports and stories before bedtime can be agitating. The sleep environment should be used only for sleep and relaxation.

Myth: Exercising before bed will make me tired, and help me sleep.

Fact: Exercise can be helpful for good sleep, especially when done regularly in the morning or afternoon and not too close to bedtime. If you don't exercise regularly, add good sleep to a long list of reasons why you should take up the practice.

However, sleep experts have cautioned people to avoid strenuous exercise right before sleep and even up to three hours before bedtime. That's because exercise has an alerting effect and raises your body temperature. This rise leads to a corresponding fall in temperature five to six hours later, which makes sleep easier then. If you've been exercising close to bedtime and having trouble falling or staying asleep, try to arrange your workout earlier in the day.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Snoring Solution:

Sleep on your side to help prevent snoring. Lying on your back allows your tongue to fall backward into your throat, which narrows your airway and partially obstructs airflow. To stay off your back, try sleeping in a tightfitting T-shirt with a tennis ball sewn or attached to the back. This uncomfortable trick will remind you to roll over. Or raise up the head of your bed by about four inches.

Mayo Clinic



Famous Sleep Quotes

“Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

“A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book.”

~ Irish Proverbs

“Sleep is the best meditation.”

~ Dalai Lama

“Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together.”

~ Thomas Dekker

