

Topic 15 SLEEP



GET ENOUGH SLEEP AND BURN BODY FAT

How about these for some thought-provoking statistics?

If you get less than 4 hours sleep each night you have a 73% risk of obesity. 5 hours sleep a night gives you a 50% chance, while 6 hours still puts you in a 23% risk zone. You need to get at least 7 hours of sleep a night, otherwise find the time to take a nap during the day, to make up the shortfall.

'Magical' sleep is the answer to a whole multitude of problems, and the beauty of it is that it's free and requires no effort. The problem is that very few of you actually take advantage of it enough! You lead such hectic lives, racing from place to place and working late that you don't actually get enough for what your body needs. If only you knew the full benefits of sleeping I'm sure you would make the time to get more of it.

Most people in the western world are walking around suffering from a long list of illnesses, aches, pains and conditions that could quite simply be cured or rectified with more sleep. Without adequate rest the human body starts to shut down to conserve energy, and as this sleep deprivation continues you will find it ever harder to catch up and feel completely refreshed.

If you really want to feel your best you need to get more rest.

Sleep is the foundation of everything you do. It allows you to rebuild your body, to replenish your chemical stores, and to have the alertness to function throughout the day. 8 hours is the recommended dose of sleep per night for the average person, yet the average person is only getting 5-6 on a good day.



Technology may have advanced in leaps and bounds, but the human body is still programmed to have the simple needs of our predecessors. When the sun goes down our bodies are designed to want to slow down and sleep. With the advent of strip lighting we are now living in an age where we can stay up all night if we want, and still carry out any chores or activities that we like, so long as we can turn on a light somewhere. This makes it more tempting to stay up longer and remain entertained by music, TV and nightlife from restaurants to bars. Over time this all has an adverse effect on our bodies.

Sleep-deprivation, both in the short and long-term, causes serious adverse health effects. Too little sleep has been linked to accelerated aging and an increased risk of diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. Sleep should be a priority in your life as it plays a dramatic role in your overall health--much like proper nutrition and regular exercise. Without enough sleep, your body will be challenged to reach its optimal state of health.

Strive for 5 Plan

Please bear in mind too that the timing of your sleep will affect its quality. The more hours that you can sleep before midnight and in synch with the sun, the better off you will be. Between the hours of 10pm and 2am your body focuses on physical repair, while mental repair takes place between 2am and 6am. Getting to bed after midnight will severely reduce your body's chances of getting sufficient rest.

SIMON'S TIPS FOR SLEEP

Avoid the consumption of stimulants (caffeine, sugar and nicotine) later in the day, particularly in the evening. If you're unable to sleep well, be particularly careful with desserts – especially ones that contain alcohol, sugar and / or caffeine. You'd be amazed how much these simple treats can disturb your sleep!

Sleep in complete darkness or as close as possible. There also should be as little light in the bathroom as possible if you get up in the middle of the night. Keep the light off when you go to the bathroom at night, because as soon as you turn on the light you will for that night immediately cease all production of the important sleep aid melatonin.

Drink plenty of water. Our bodies have very little water reserve. Once dehydrated, the body responds as though it's experiencing stress – keeping you awake!



Exercise will help you sleep better at night. Try to avoid exercising late in the evening, as you will be stimulating the body and sleep patterns may be disrupted. Intense or cardio exercise can increase stress levels, making it hard to get to sleep.

Try unplugging all electrical appliances in your bedroom before going to bed, including clocks, TVs and lights. Electrical currents and interference may affect your sleep patterns. Do not watch TV just before bed, as this will stimulate your brain, making sleep harder.

Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed. When body temperature is raised in the late evening, it will fall at bedtime, facilitating sleep,

Take daily power naps. Nearly everyone has some sleep debt. When this sleep debt leaves you with less energy, less motivation, and a lack of alertness, it is critical that you pay it off. Napping is an excellent way to quickly decrease the symptoms of sleep deprivation and to pay off some of your sleep debt.



Limit nap times to 20 minutes or less. Longer naps tend to create sleep inertia (a period of lethargy, poor mood, and decreased alertness following the nap) and reduce the effectiveness of evening sleeping, where the deeper stages of sleep occur. The effectiveness of napping is increased when it is performed in the middle of the day. Although everyone is different, this is usually between 13:00 and 15:00.

If you don't have the chance to nap, at least get some rest. Taking a brief break and clearing your mind will help you restore energy for later in the day. Rest time needs to be away from all other distractions and noises.

Don't worry if you don't fall asleep during your nap time. Just closing your eyes and relaxing peacefully will be refreshing. Make sure you go to the toilet before you settle down. Find a quiet dark place and close the door so you will not be disturbed. Set a timer so you don't stress about oversleeping. Listen to some quiet relaxing music to drown out the outside noise. Practice clearing your thoughts and focus on your breathing.