

SLEEP

ANYONE HERE FEEL LIKE THEY COULD'VE USED MORE SLEEP LAST NIGHT?

I don't know about you, but sleep is something that is becoming more and more important to me the older I get but is something that seems to be a struggle to get enough of. Maybe you folks can relate to my typical day; awake at 3:30 AM to be out the door by 4:15 AM. An hour and a half in wonderful bay area traffic to get to work by 5:45 AM. Work at least 10 hours and back on the road to get back home around 6:00 PM on a good day. Family responsibilities until 8:00 PM and in bed by 10:00 PM if I can wind down by then. Rinse and repeat day in and day out. I'm exhausted just talking about it! I'm sure it comes as no surprise to anyone that good sleep is important for many reasons. While we sleep our bodies are working to support healthy brain functions and maintain our physical health. When we get good sleep, we are more alert, make better decisions, are more energetic, and stay healthier. For our children and teenagers, sleep is also helping support their growth and development.

HOW MUCH SLEEP SHOULD WE BE GETTING?

Experts recommend the following for each group:

- Adults, 7-9 hours of sleep per night
- Children 3-5 years old, 10-13 hours per night
- Children 6-12 years old, 9-12 hours per night
- Teenagers, 8-10 hours per night

So, on the flipside, when we get less than 6 hours of sleep per night that is considered a lack of sleep. Prolonged lack of sleep can lead to many different health issues. Interrupted or broken sleep is also included in this. Studies show that lack of sleep can lead to a higher risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. When we sleep our bodies go into a deep state of relaxation. Our heart rate and breathing slow down tremendously which takes a huge strain off our heart and circulatory system. When we aren't sleeping these systems must work overtime and are not given a chance to rest. Some other areas that get affected by lack of sleep are our immune systems and our brain function. During sleep there is a particular type of immune cell that works harder. When we do not get enough sleep, we become more susceptible to getting colds or other infections. And when we're sick, we miss work...when we miss work, we don't get paid. As far as the brain goes, one of the things that happens when we sleep is the brain's filing system turns on and the formation of short-term and long-term memories can take place. The things we learn throughout the day get sorted out and filed away for future use. When we aren't getting enough sleep, we can experience problems focusing, thinking clearly, and with decision making. Daily activities like work or driving can be affected, we're not running at 100% and this can be very dangerous in our line of work!

WHAT CAN WE DO TO GET BETTER SLEEP?

If you're like me, you're simply out of hours in the day so I need to make sure that the sleep I do get is quality sleep.

Here are some things we can do to make sure we achieve better sleep:



Don't eat food for a few hours before bed.

When we eat our bodies digestive system goes to work.



Don't drink caffeine at least 6 hours before bed.

Caffeine blocks the signals in our brain that tell us we're tired and will cause us to sleep poorly.



Drink less alcohol.

I know we tend to think that when we drink, we get a deeper sleep, but that is just simply not the case. When we drink, we're not getting quality deep sleep and REM sleep.



Don't exercise before bed.

Exercise literally gets our circulatory and respiratory systems charged up and if we do this too close to bedtime it will be difficult to fall asleep.



Associate the bedroom with sleeping.

There's lots of things that happen in the bedroom. When we watch TV, read, or play on our phones in bed, our brain begins to associate the bedroom for all these other activities. It is best to do these activities in another room and head to the bedroom when you are tired and ready to sleep.



If you can, take naps.

We can't work off our sleep debt unfortunately, but studies show that 15-20-minute naps during the day have many benefits to memory function, alertness, stress reduction, and emotional well-being.

There are many websites that offer education and resources for better sleep:

[TOP-RANKED HOSPITAL IN THE NATION - MAYO CLINIC](#)

[START SLEEPING - EXPERT ADVICE ON ALL THINGS SLEEP](#)

[HOME PAGE - SLEEP EDUCATION - AMERICAN ACADEMY OF SLEEP MEDICINE](#)

There are some disorders like sleep apnea that affect sleep as well. If you believe that you may suffer from a sleep disorder, please contact a medical professional. When I doubt, ask and seek help



If you see this 393 Peer Supporter hard hat sticker it means the individual has received training and is a safe person to confide in.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
pttc.edu/mental-health-and-wellness