

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

March 2016

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Your Guide to Healthy Sleep: Part One



What is sleep?

Sleep was long considered just a block of time when your brain and body shut down. Thanks to sleep research studies done over the past several decades, it is now known that sleep has distinct stages that cycle throughout the night in predictable patterns. Your brain and body functions stay active throughout sleep, but different things happen during each stage. For instance, certain stages of sleep are needed for us to feel well rested and energetic the next day, and other stages help us learn or make memories.

In brief, a number of vital tasks carried out during sleep help people stay healthy and function at their best. On the other hand, not getting enough sleep can be dangerous—for example, you are more likely to be in a car crash if you drive when you are drowsy.

How much sleep is enough?

Sleep needs vary from person to person, and they change throughout the life cycle. Most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Newborns, on the other hand, sleep between 16 and 18 hours a day, and children in preschool sleep between 11 and 12 hours a day. School-aged children and teens need at least 10 hours of sleep each night.

Some people believe that adults need less sleep as they get older, but there is no evidence to show that older people can get by with less sleep than younger people. As people age, however, they often get less sleep, or they tend to spend less time in the deep, restful stage of sleep. Older people are also more easily awakened.

Online Seminar Reminder

Let's Sleep on It

Available on-demand
March 15, 2016

Where:

www.deeroakseap.com

Our popular online seminars are now available on demand. You no longer need to register and attend at a set time. Seminars will be pre-recorded and uploaded on the third Tuesday of each month:

- Go to your homepage to find the Online Seminar link.
- Click on the link provided and follow the instructions to launch the seminar.
- If you have questions type them into the "Ask a question" box.
- You will receive an answer within five business days. All questions and answers will be posted on the FAQ tab.





Your Guide to Healthy Sleep: Part Two

Why sleep is good for you—and skimping on it isn't.

Does it really matter if you get enough sleep? Absolutely! Not only does the quantity of your sleep matter, but the quality of your sleep is important as well. People whose sleep is frequently interrupted or cut short might not get enough of certain stages of sleep. In other words, how well rested you are and how well you function the next day depend on your total sleep time and how much of the various stages of sleep you get each night.

Performance: We need sleep to think clearly, react quickly, and create memories. In fact, the pathways in the brain that help us learn and remember are very active when we sleep. People who are taught mentally challenging tasks do better after a good night's sleep, and sleep is needed for creative problem solving. Skimping on sleep has a price. Cutting back by even one hour can make it tough to focus the next day and can slow your response time. When you lack sleep, you are more likely to make bad decisions and take more risks. This can result in lower performance on the job or in school and a greater risk for a car crash.

Mood: Sleep affects mood. Insufficient sleep can make you irritable and is linked to poor behavior and trouble with relationships, especially among children and teens. People who chronically lack sleep are also more likely to become depressed.

Health: Sleep is also important for good health. Not getting enough sleep or getting poor quality sleep on a regular basis increases the risk of having high blood pressure, heart disease, and other medical conditions.

In addition, during sleep, your body produces valuable hormones. Deep sleep triggers more release of growth hormone, which fuels growth in children and boosts muscle mass and the repair of cells and tissues in children and adults. Another type of hormone that increases during sleep helps the immune system fight various infections. This might explain why a good night's sleep helps keep you from getting sick, and helps you recover when you do get sick. Hormones released during sleep also control the body's use of energy. The less people sleep, the more likely they are to be overweight or obese, to develop diabetes, and to prefer eating foods that are high in calories and carbohydrates.

It's About Time

How sleepy you are depends largely on how well you've been sleeping and how much sleep you've been getting. Another key factor is your internal biological clock—a small bundle of cells in your brain that controls when you feel sleepy and your sleep patterns (based on responses to internal and external environmental cues, such as light signals received through your eyes). Because of the timing of the biological clock and other bodily processes, you naturally feel the most tired between midnight and 7:00 a.m. and again in the afternoon between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Night shift workers often find themselves drowsy at work. They also have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep during the day, when their schedules require them to sleep. Being sleepy puts them at risk for injuries on the road and at work. Night shift workers are also more likely to have conditions such as heart disease, digestive troubles, and infertility, as well as emotional problems. All of these problems may be related, at least in part, to their chronic lack of sleep.

Adapting to new sleep and wake times can also be hard for travelers crossing time zones, resulting in what's known as jet lag. Jet lag can lead to daytime sleepiness, trouble falling asleep or staying asleep at night, poor concentration, and irritability. The good news is that by using appropriately timed cues, most people can reset their biological clock, but only by 1-2 hours per day at best. Therefore, it can take several days to adjust to a new time zone or different work schedule. If you'll be moving across time zones, you might want to begin adapting to the new time zone a few days before leaving. Or, if you are traveling for just a few days, you might want to stick with your original sleep schedule and not try to adjust to the new time zone.

Your Guide to Healthy Sleep: Part Three

Get a good night's sleep.

Like eating well and being physically active, getting a good night's sleep is vital to your well-being. Here are 13 tips to help you:

- **Stick to a sleep schedule.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day—even on the weekends.
- **Exercise is great, but not too late in the day.** Try to exercise at least 30 minutes on most days but not later than 2-3 hours before your bedtime.
- **Avoid caffeine and nicotine.** The stimulating effects of caffeine in coffee, colas, certain teas, and chocolate can take as long as 8 hours to wear off fully. Nicotine is also a stimulant.
- **Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed.** A nightcap might help you get to sleep, but alcohol keeps you in the lighter stages of sleep. You also tend to wake up in the middle of the night when the sedating effects have worn off.
- **Avoid large meals and beverages late at night.** A large meal can cause indigestion that interferes with sleep. Drinking too many fluids at night can cause you to awaken frequently to urinate.
- **Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep, if possible.** Some commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure, or asthma medications, as well as some over-the-counter and herbal remedies for coughs, colds, or allergies can disrupt sleep patterns.
- **Don't take naps after 3:00 p.m.** Naps can boost your brain power, but late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night. Also, keep naps to under an hour.
- **Relax before bed.** Take time to unwind. A relaxing activity, such as reading or listening to music, should be part of your bedtime ritual.
- **Take a hot bath before bed.** The drop in body temperature after the bath may help you feel sleepy, and the bath can help you relax.
- **Have a good sleeping environment.** Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, such as noises, bright lights, an uncomfortable bed, or a TV or computer. Also, keeping the temperature in your bedroom on the cool side can help you sleep better.
- **Have the right sunlight exposure.** Daylight is key to regulating daily sleep patterns. Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day.
- **Don't lie in bed awake.** If you find yourself still awake after staying in bed for more than 20 minutes, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.
- **See a doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping.** If you consistently find yourself feeling tired or not well rested during the day despite spending enough time in bed at night, you may have a sleep disorder. Your family doctor or a sleep specialist should be able to help you.

Source: https://www.advantageengagement.com/p_content_detail.php?id_element=001&id_cr=48302

Calcium is okay

How much to take? Creighton researchers recommend the guidelines established by the Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes: men and women (19 to 50 years) 1,000 mg/day; men and women (51 and over) 1,200; teenagers (9 to 18 years) 1,300.

Health-e headlines™

So how does exercise help the heart?

Exercise benefits the heart by decreasing its workload. Exercise improves the ratio between the heart's demand for oxygen and its supply through the coronary arteries.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.





Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

Sleep is one of the most valuable functions in which our bodies engage. Nearly instantly we feel the effects of an exceptionally restful night's sleep, or on the contrary, the effects of a night of restless sleep. Sleeping allows our bodies to engage in restorative processes, almost like recharging our physical and emotional batteries. Though for most of us it is recommended that we sleep between 7 and 9 hours per night, many people go through periods of falling well under this.

There are many potential causes of poor sleep. These can range from situational life stressors (work, money, relationship issues, etc.), physical pain or medical issues, shift work, and underlying emotional distress. Both anxiety and depression often involve sleep disturbances, including difficulties falling asleep, staying asleep, or being constantly tired and/or oversleeping.

In order to optimize your sleep hygiene, a few changes may make a big difference:

- Try keeping a sleep diary. List all of the activities you do in the hour or two before bed, and then log when you get in to bed, how long it takes to sleep, how frequently you wake in the night, and how much total sleep you receive. This may give you clues as to why your sleeping patterns have been out of sync.
- Aside from the evenings when you keep a sleep diary, keep clocks out of view at night.
- Stick to the same sleep/wake schedule – even on weekends! Most people treasure sleeping in on non-work days, but doing this can create what can be known as a sleep hangover because your body gets two days to get out of cycle, and then is forced back into the normal routine again come Monday morning. Try to wake and go to bed at the same time, give or take an hour.
- If you are awake in the middle of the night, get up and try engaging in a relatively boring task.
- Keep your bed for sleeping and intimacy only. Watching TV, reading, or playing video games can send your brain confusing signals as to whether you are going to sleep or engage in a hobby.
- Engage in physical activity during the day, but not right before bed.
- Try to limit caffeine consumption, especially in the afternoon.

If you try most of these techniques and are still struggling to sleep well, it may be time to talk to your doctor about possible causes and to help get you back on track. Want to learn more? Check us out online at www.deeroakseap.com.

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How To: Choose and Open a Personal Savings Account



If you are working toward saving money, one of the savings vehicles you may want to consider is a savings account. Savings accounts usually pay interest (although a relatively small amount) on the account, and your savings is generally protected by FDIC insurance. A savings account is relatively uncomplicated, but there are definitely some things to consider and evaluate before choosing and opening one.

First, consider which bank you want to open the account with. Look for convenience, and accessibility, but also consider the interest paid. Some banks only pay interest over a specific account balance, or with some, the interest increases as the balance increases.

Also review any fees that you may have to pay. Common fees include low balance fees, monthly fees, and ATM fees (if you have access to your money via ATM). Any fees that you have to pay will likely reduce your savings, so try to minimize them.

You may consider opening a savings account with an online bank. While online banks are less accessible, they often offer no-fee accounts with larger interest payments. Think about how you will use the account—if you don't plan to make many withdrawals, it's probably worth it.

Once you decide upon a bank, you'll have to determine what kind of savings account you'll open. A basic savings account offers minimum interest but fewer requirements and restrictions, while money market or high-yield accounts often offer higher interest rates but more restrictions.

After you open your account, remember to start saving. Even if you only have a small amount to contribute each month, even a little money is a great start.

About Money Management International

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