

Newsletter

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Catching some Zzzs

Erik Klein DC and Maria Boyle DC
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I think we can all agree that there is nothing better than waking up after a restful night sleep feeling rejuvenated, refreshed and ready to tackle what life throws our way. Good quality sleep puts our bodies into the parasympathetic state – more commonly known as the “rest and digest” nervous system. It is not surprising that during this state our body and mind rest, digest and revitalize to help support healthy brain function.

The World Health Organization and the National Sleep Foundation both recommend seven to nine hours of sleep a night for the average adult. However, 50-70 million adults in the United States are failing to obtain those precious and recommended hours of sleep. In today’s world, it is so easy to access information through social media, podcasts, and magazines. Why are so many of us depriving ourselves of sleep on purpose? Both the journal Sleep Health (the journal of the National Sleep Foundation) and the book Why We Sleep by Dr. Matthew Walker are a few of the accessible resources that should be recognized for those who want to dive into the topic of sleep a little further.

While “hustle” is an integral part of building any successful business, hustling smart and efficiently is key. Getting the right amount of sleep for your own recharge needs to be a part of this plan. Dr. Michael Breus, a leading sleep expert determined that there are four primary chronotypes of sleep patterns. Which one are you?

The Lion (15% of the population)

The Lion is the chronotype that gets all of the attention. These are the folks that wake at 4-5 a.m., hit the gym, and have an abundance of energy early in the day, being most productive during the morning. The Lions will set meetings first thing. However, there is a down side: They don’t tend to be the life of the party. The cost of waking so early, is a very early shut down in the evening. So schmoozing, networking, family activities and/or recreation tend to take a hit.

The Wolf (15% of the population)

The Wolf tends to be a late sleeper, not truly feeling comfortable until about 10am, with their highest productivity during mid-afternoon, hence when they like to meet. Around dinner time, early evening, they’ll be in a lull, but coming to full attention after 8pm, and often not feeling ready for bed until 12-2 a.m. Wolves tend to be judged negatively, often being called lazy. Wolves forcing themselves to wake consistently early will often encounter health issues later in life, as we discuss below.

The Bear (50-55% of the population)

The bear wakes with the sun, and starts winding down at dusk. This is the majority of the population.

The Dolphin (15% of the population)

These are your insomniacs. Wide awake at night, and fatigued during the day. These folks have the most difficulty functioning in society and frequently require medical intervention to get by.

WHY DO WE NEED TO SLEEP?

If it wasn't as important as eating well, reproducing or being safe from our predators, then why, since the beginning of time have humans been risking all of these vital parts of life to sleep? From an evolutionary standpoint, it does not make any sense to lie motionless and be vulnerable to our prey; however, since the birth of our species, we have been sleeping for at least 2/3rd of our day. While we are dreaming our brain and bodies are going through a series of cyclical patterns to revitalize key components to help us thrive in our conscious state. There is not one stage of sleep that is more important than the other; it is the cyclical process of all stages that is important. Each one of these stages plays its own role to be sure to keep our minds sharp, to translate short term learnings into concrete knowledge, to rest our sympathetic state so that we can go about our day feely less grumpy or "on edge" and to enhance our immune systems so we can fight off infection and illness. The different stages of sleep are classified as:

1. Light NREM (non-rapid eye movement sleep)
2. Deep NREM
3. REM sleep.

HOW DOES SLEEP ACTUALLY BENEFIT US?

A study out of the University of Rochester Medical Center suggests that while we are in REM (rapid-eye-movement sleep), our brain cells shrink by 60% to allow for the waste system in our brains to clear our metabolic by-product and rehydrate cerebral spinal fluid throughout the brain. It helps to form connections between recently learned information. Sleep allows us to remember and it also has the ability to help us to forget things we may not want to dwell on. This is great news for chiropractors who treat individuals who suffer from chronic pain conditions or those who are receiving treatment following a traumatic event. There have been multiple studies that have been done recently looking at the effects of sleep and psychiatric conditions and many of these studies show clinically significant benefits. If you were to indulge in this topic of sleep deprivation leading to poor mood it makes sense. If we do not sleep well, we are more irritable and when we are more irritable it may be harder for us to create relationships or be happy throughout the day, which can lead to depression.

EFFECTS OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION

We have all experienced sleep deprivation. Ever wonder why you get those hunger cravings following a short sleep or the feeling of satiation is just not there? It is due to the fact that when we are not sleeping enough, the hormone that suppresses our hunger is tainted. This can lead to a downward spiral for someone's health if this is an everyday occurrence. Another downfall of sleep deprivation is the effect on our mood, or our lack of motivation to do anything physical. When your slumber was not as restorative as it could have been often time we wake up feeling grumpy, irritated and tired, which makes it extremely difficult to

motivate yourself – we do not have the energy to be physically active in these states of deprivation. When we sleep less, we move less – and when we move less this increases our risk for developing cardiovascular conditions.

The National Institute of Health recommends twelve tips for healthy sleeping patterns:

- Stick to a sleep schedule
- Exercise is great but not too late
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine
- Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed
- Avoid large meals and beverages late at night
- Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep
- Don't take naps after 3 p.m.
- Relax before bed
- Take a hot bath before bed
- Have a good sleeping environment
- Have the right sunlight exposure
- Don't lie in bed awake
- Try to align with your chronotype if possible.

Similar to how physical activity and nutrition play a huge role in our health and recovery, so to does sleep quality. This is one of the easiest ways we can have an impact on our lives. Sleep is one of the cheapest, most enjoyable forms of ealthcare out there.