

Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

Here's Why It Matters...



Many of us are concerned about eating a healthy diet or getting enough exercise, but we don't give a second thought to the importance of getting enough sleep. According to Harvard Medical School, more people are sleeping less than six hours a night. A May 2018 article in the *Journal of Sleep Research* suggests that if you don't get enough sleep during the week, sleeping more on the weekend may cancel out at least some of the health risks associated with sleep lost during the week. That said, it is wise to follow the advice of medical experts who have seen the detrimental effects of chronic sleep loss on health. Here are some added benefits you'll enjoy if you get seven to eight hours of sleep each night.

Good for Your Waistline

Sleep and metabolism are controlled by the same part of the brain, so sleep deprivation may change the way our bodies use and store carbohydrates as well as altering the hormones that affect our appetites. When you're sleepy, the hormones that drive appetite go up in your blood and may make you hungry.

Improved Heart Health

Regardless of your age, weight, and exercise habits, you are at greater risk for coronary heart disease and cardiovascular disease if you are chronically sleep-deprived. Although the connection between the risks and lack of sleep are not completely understood, chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to hypertension, increased stress hormone levels, and irregular heartbeat.

Immune System Benefits

Sleep deprivation suppresses the function of the immune system. In short, lack of sleep can make you sick. Our immune systems are made up of several types of cells and proteins that protect our bodies from invaders that cause colds and flu. Lack of sleep drives down our T-cells, while proinflammatory cytokines go up.

Improved Memory

Your brain is busy while you sleep! Through a process called "consolidation," your brain strengthens memories and practices skills you learned while awake to make you perform better when you awaken.

Decrease in Inflammation

Research shows that people who get six or fewer hours of sleep have higher levels of inflammatory proteins in their blood than those who sleep longer.

Greater Creativity

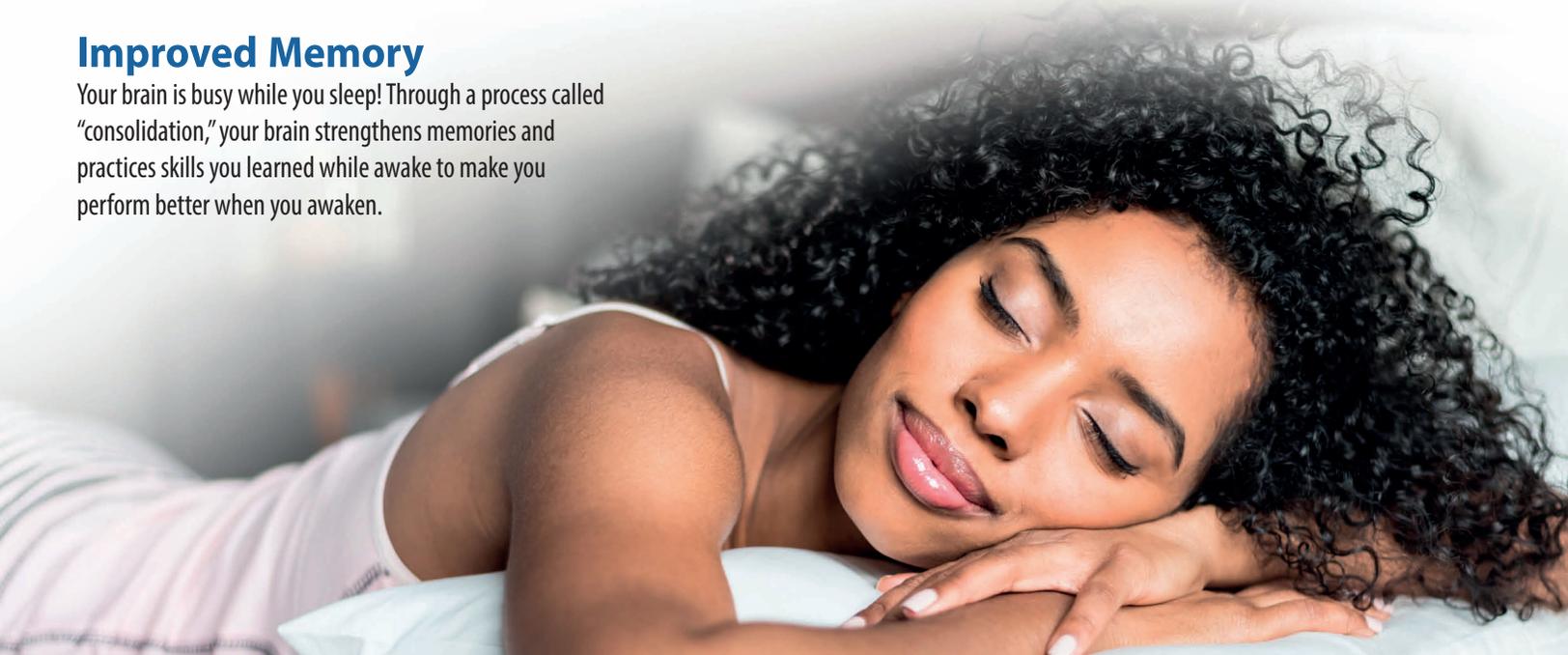
Researchers at Harvard University and Boston College found that the emotional components of memory are strengthened during sleep, which is thought to "spur" the creative process.

Be A Better Athlete

Studies have found that athletes who slept at least 10 hours over a period of weeks had improved athletic performance and less daytime fatigue.

Peak Performance

Lack of adequate sleep leads to poor academic performance. Memory, the ability to concentrate, and higher cognitive function are all impacted by sleep-deprivation. You can turn this around by getting a full seven to eight hours of sleep per night.



5 Quick Tips to Get Better Sleep

- 1** Choose a specific bedtime and stick to it.
Create a routine associated with slowing down and going to bed. (Brush your teeth, wash your face or shower, lay out clothes for the next morning, etc.) Listen to soft music.
- 2** Do not work in bed, use electronic devices, or have a television screen on when trying to get to sleep. These are more likely to disrupt your ability to get to sleep.
- 3** Don't eat or drink (except water) late at night.
- 4** Turn out the lights or only have a very soft light on such as a nightlight.
- 5**

Now, relax and go catch some ZZZs.



SNOOZE-HAPPY SNACKS



Can food and drink impact your sleep cycle? Absolutely! Getting a better night's sleep means more than just avoiding caffeine and heavy foods at night. Certain foods and beverages actually help you fall asleep faster and enable you to sleep more soundly. Here are a few items that will help you to get better sleep.

Handful of Nuts

Not only are they a source of heart-healthy fats, but almonds, walnuts, pumpkin and sunflower seeds contain melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate your sleep/wake cycle.



Select Fruits

Tart cherries are high in melatonin, along with bananas, pineapple, and oranges. Kiwis are another fruit that can help with insomnia, and increase your sleep duration.

Whole Grains

Try to avoid white bread, pasta, and baked goods. These foods reduce your serotonin levels and actually impair sleep. Instead, make a snack of popcorn, whole wheat crackers, and oatmeal.



Cottage Cheese

High in lean protein, cottage cheese is rich with the amino acid tryptophan, which can increase serotonin levels, helping you sleep more soundly.

Warm Milk

Just like hot tea, warm milk can provide a soothing, relaxing bedtime treat. Warm milk also offers some tryptophan and melatonin, which helps to improve sleep.

