



The Be Fit Minute

By Emily Gelsomin, RD, LDN



FIGHTING FATIGUE? SLEEP ON IT

Tired? Spacey? Cranky? Sensitive? Just not feeling like “you?” It could be your shut-eye (or lack of it).

Common Side Effects of Inadequate Sleep:

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| ↓ memory | ↓ ability to complete tasks |
| ↑ blood sugar (decreased insulin sensitivity) | ↑ weight |
| ↑ risk of injury | ↑ food cravings and overeating |
| ↑ perception of pain | ↑ cortisol (which affects your immunity, reproduction, and digestion) |

How Much is Enough?



Most people need 7 to 9 hours a night. BUT getting 8½ to 9 hours has been associated with better task performance.

If you can't wake (and feel restored) without an alarm clock you are probably not getting enough.

Are you falling asleep when you should be awake? You likely aren't getting enough shut-eye.

Adequate Sleep Can Improve:

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|---|---|
| •Your ability to solve problems | •Your ability to cope with stress |
| •Your willpower to choose healthy foods | •Your ability to practice portion control |
| •Your workouts | •Your overall wellbeing |

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP HABITS

Establish a Routine

Getting up the same time every day (within 1 to 2 hours) helps your body establish a sleep routine and promotes sound shuteye. It also helps maintain your body's internal clock (i.e. its circadian rhythm), which responds to light and darkness and helps regulate sleep, hormones, and body temperature.

Stop Self-Medicating

Drinking alcohol to “relax” can cause you to fall asleep earlier, but you'll sleep lighter and suppress deep sleep. Benadryl may knock you out, but it also blocks deep, restorative sleep and can cause rebound insomnia.

Seek Light During the Day ... Not Night

Bright lights at night suppress melatonin and make it hard to fall asleep. Keep evening computer, phone, and TV time to a minimum.

Fight Insomnia

If it is chronically difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep, you may have insomnia. This is often triggered by a life event and your genes may play a role. Practicing mindfulness, meditation, and cognitive behavioral therapy are all strategies to fight it.

Get Moving

Exercising any time of the day is helpful. Vigorous exercise can be even *more* helpful, especially if you do it between 5 and 7 pm, which can advance your circadian clock, making it easier to fall asleep earlier.

Make a Plan

If you are consistently getting only 3, 5—even 7—hours of sleep a night, it's likely not enough. But you need more than a weekend to fully pay off your sleep debt, preferably 1 to 2 weeks of ample sleep (meaning *ideally* 8 to 10+ hours). You'll probably need to prioritize other activities to do this. Try writing down things you'd be willing to temporarily reduce or give up to increase your sleep.

Still Struggling? Try Melatonin

Melatonin is naturally produced in the body to regulate your internal clock. Using melatonin may make it easier to sleep. It is generally safe (look for 3 to 5 mg of sustained extended release melatonin), though be sure to talk with a health-professional before starting it. Taking beta-blockers? These drugs can inhibit melatonin, so it may be particularly helpful to take as a supplement. Talk to your doctor.

DID YOU KNOW: disrupting your natural internal clock (i.e. your circadian rhythm) and getting inadequate sleep can decrease your body's ability to burn calories (by about 200 calories a day!).