



Get More and BETTER Sleep

Many kicked off the New Year by staying up until midnight. However, did you know that getting more, and better quality sleep, can be beneficial on multiple health fronts?



“Insufficient sleep can decrease the immune system’s ability to be as strong as it should to fight common illnesses such as head colds and other viruses,” said Dr. Nathan Samras, a primary care physician at UCLA Health. “It can also increase the risk and severity of various mood problems including anxiety and depression.”

Waking multiple times throughout the night, whether you remember you did or not, can also be problematic. Disrupted sleep, especially when caused by apnea (a disorder that causes snoring and chronic insomnia because breathing starts and stops) increases the risk of heart disease.

There are also general safety reasons to make sure you are getting enough zzz’s. Dr. Charles Czeisler, director of the Sleep Matters Initiative at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, says that “Fifty-six million Americans admit they are struggling to keep their eyes open while driving. Eight million people every month lose that struggle and actually fall asleep at the wheel, causing over a million crashes, 55,000 debilitating injuries and nearly 7,000 deaths every year.”

Most adults need around eight hours of sleep each night, but the requirement varies by age and individual.

The National Sleep Foundation has rough estimates on how much sleep you should be getting, but Czeisler also recommends conducting your own sleep experiment over a holiday or vacation week. Each night, set a bedtime alarm so you can go to sleep at the same time – but do not set a wake-up alarm. Doing so will allow you to measure the sleep cycle that your body naturally wants.

“At first, when you are sleeping on the weekend, you might sleep nine or 10 hours, but that’s really making up for lost time,” Czeisler said. But over a series of days, you’ll settle into a more natural pattern – “sleeping like 8.1 or 8.2 hours a night, for the average person,” he added.

If weight loss is part of your New Year’s resolution, getting sufficient sleep can help you lose the right kind of pounds. Individuals on the same caloric diets lose the same amount of weight regardless of their sleep habits. But those getting insufficient sleep force their brain into a starvation mode, prompting weight loss from muscle mass rather than fat. “If you are getting a sufficient amount of sleep,” Czeisler said, “then you will lose twice as much fat when you are on that same diet.”

Forget the crash diet. These 6 New Year’s resolutions are better for your health. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/forget-the-crash-diet-these-6-new-years-resolutions-are-better-for-your-health>

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See calendar on other side to see what is going on this week

Tips for better sleep, according to experts

1. Read a book for 30 minutes before bedtime instead of watching brain-stimulating television.
2. Avoid food two hours before bed, and stay away from liquids in the hour before going to sleep.
3. “No caffeine from mid-afternoon on,” said Dr. Carolyn Kreinsen, an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School and staff physician at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Substituting glasses of water for caffeinated beverages can also help with afternoon energy lags.
4. Make your bed as comfortable as possible. “If you don’t have a comfortable mattress, buy one if you can afford it. Get a topper. Get anything that is going to make you sleep better,” especially if pain is part of the reason you can’t sleep, Kreinsen said

How to Survive New Year’s Sleep Deprivation

- Don’t feel the need to stay up until 3 a.m. Minimizing the impact of New Year’s Eve on your sleep schedule may mean missing a little bit of the party.
- Don’t sleep in until noon on January 1: No matter when you go to bed, try to get up within an hour or so of your normal wake-up time. Also...
- Nap on New Year’s Day: You’re certainly going to be tired, so a midday nap of 20-30 minutes is a good idea.

How to Survive New Year’s Sleep Deprivation. Retrieved from <https://sleepbetter.org/how-to-survive-new-years-sleep-deprivation/>

A Personal Message From Your Health Promotion Health Myth Busting Team



Dear Health Myth Busters,

I want to set some goals for this next year and I was thinking about my sleep patterns. Is it true that sleep and stress can affect our ability to accomplish what we really want, or need, to do?

Sincerely,
Setting Sleep Goals

Dear Setting Sleep Goals,

Poor sleep is the main reason why most of us who make New Year’s resolutions fail within six months. Sleep positively influences our self-control, giving us the ability to resist pleasurable impulses in order to achieve longer-term goals, thus making resolutions more sustainable.

The biology of stress and the biology of willpower are incompatible. When we’re under chronic stress, it’s harder to find our willpower. Stress encourages us to focus on immediate, short-term goals and outcomes; while self-control/willpower requires us to keep the big picture in mind. Learning how to better manage stress - or even just remembering to take a few deep breaths when we’re feeling overwhelmed - is one of the most important things we can do to improve our willpower and accomplish our long term goals.

Sleep deprivation (even just getting less than six hours a night) is a kind of chronic stress that impairs how the body and brain use energy. Lack of sleep affects the prefrontal cortex, where it loses control over the regions of the brain that create cravings and the stress response. Unchecked, the brain overreacts to ordinary, everyday stress and temptations. Studies show that the effects of sleep deprivation on our brain are equivalent to being a little bit drunk! The good news is any step toward more or better quality rest can be a real boost to self-control. When we continually get a good night’s sleep, our brain scans no longer show signs of prefrontal cortex impairment.

Sincerely,
Health Myth Busters

The Science of Willpower. Retrieved from <https://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2011/12/29/a-conversation-about-the-science-of-willpower/>

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you “Bust The Myths!” Send your questions to usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.hpo@mail.mil. Make sure to include in the subject line “Health Myth Buster.” For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>

Community Events

HERE’S WHAT’S GOING ON WHERE YOU LIVE

Your Local Health Promotion Office



Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday