



SLEEPING IT OFF



Sleep is one of the most vital components to leading a healthy life. By getting an adequate amount of sleep you allow your body the proper time to recover from physical, mental, and emotional stress. By not getting enough sleep you drastically alter your body's chemical balances leading to physiological and mental disorders. The following advice will help you understand why it is utterly important to get 7-9 hours of QUALITY sleep per night.

Keep your heart healthy — Lack of sleep has long been associated with increased blood pressure, cholesterol, and the chance of dying from heart disease. Many of these effects are due to the limitations you place on your body when it comes to facilitating proper recovery methods that occur during sleep.

Reduce stress — Unfortunately stress and sleep go hand in hand. When stress increases, sleep declines. When sleep declines, stress increases. It is important to keep these factors in healthy balance or you can find yourself falling into a vicious spiral. Not enough sleep will result in releases of stress hormones, such as epinephrine and norepinephrine, causing your body to remain in a constant state of stress. This lack of homeostasis will cause increases in blood pressure, cholesterol, body fat stores, and make it harder to sleep. Try to find ways to relax throughout the day, especially after work, to ensure you are in the proper mindset to sleep well that night!

Fight depression—Again, a lack of sleep will lead to decreases in your body's natural levels of serotonin, a naturally secreted hormone that helps keep you happy! Decreases in the level of this essential hormone can lead to an increased sense of anxiety and prolonged depression. Both of which can in turn further alter your sleep patterns.

Stay fit and trim—These chemical alterations in your body can not only make you feel sluggish and out of shape, but truly will put the pounds on through the day! Stress hormones, like cortisol, can also cause your body to begin storing more fat. This heightened level of stress and anxiety will often cause people to binge or just simply eat in excess. This is partly due to the release of ghrelin and leptin, appetite hormones, that decrease your ability to sense that your body is “full” and stop eating. Clinical tests have also shown that on average, people who get less than seven hours of sleep per night tend to have significantly higher body fat percentages than those who get 7-9 hours of sleep. You can fight these responses by staying active and maintaining a healthy diet. By doing these two things you will also increase your chances of having a nice, sound, sleep at night.

Enhance brain function—Everyone knows how good it feels to wake up from a long, restful night's sleep. This can also be the case when squeezing in a short nap during the day. Proper amounts of sleep have been shown to enhance brain function, alertness, cognitive thinking processes, short and long term memory, and general mood.

Let your body rebuild and refuel—Sleep is the most important time for your body in terms of recovery and rebuilding. The release of growth hormone and insulin growth factor 1 are highest during sleep. These hormones elicit increased amino acid production and protein synthesis to rebuild the damage your body has endured throughout the day. This is also when your body replenishes nutrient stores. One important example is the replenishing of glycogen stores, a polysaccharide of glucose, and one of the most important substrates used during exercise.

So, you can do yourself and your sleep wonders by focusing on reducing daily stress, eating healthy, and staying active. By taking the extra time to work these things into your day you will find yourself hitting the pillow with ease at night and feeling much better the next day!



Town of
Beech Mountain

