

Sleep: The Ultimate Elixir to Vibrant Health and Active Longevity

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Sleep – Nature’s Healer

After a good night’s sleep, we wake up happier and more productive at work, at home, or at the gym. Our brains are healthier and we have less chance of illness. And a bonus: research has shown that *beauty sleep* is real!

During the Holiday Season, when stress is high and To-Do Lists are long, a good night’s sleep can neutralize our stress. It can also reduce chances of weight gain, keep our energy up, and propel us to a fresh start for the New Year!

Even a short nap mid-afternoon can ease stress, boost memory, improve job performance, lift our mood, make us more alert, and lower our blood pressure. And that’s just the beginning. [1]

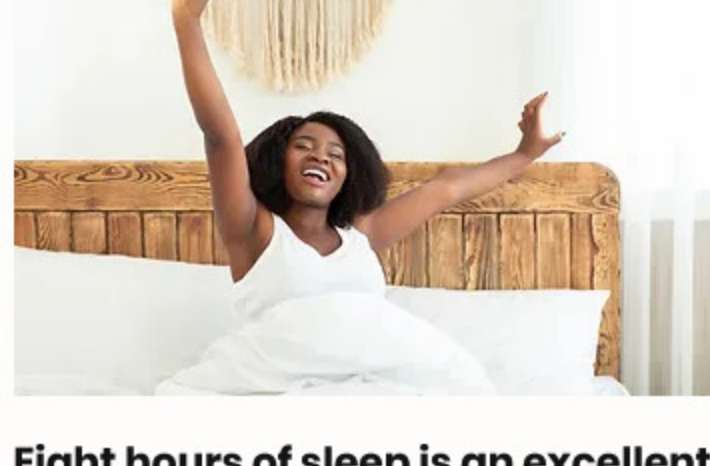
For those who are not blessed with the gift of quality sleep or know someone who doesn’t sleep well, we compiled this blog to give you the latest remedies and inspiration.



Help is on the way!

This article brings you tips from both sleep scientists who focus on clinical research in their sleep labs and from naturopathic and medical doctors who hear what works and what doesn’t work from their patients.

Why you should care – the lifelong, profound health benefits of good sleep.



Maybe you just want to start your day feeling great. A day you’re feeling at the top of your game, ready to go out and change the world! Or, you want deep rest before a career-defining race.

Eight hours of sleep is an excellent use of our precious time:

- It helps memory, cognitive function, and emotional equilibrium – we feel better in every way
- It helps prevent metabolic disorders like Type 2 diabetes and out-of-balance hormones
- Fosters proper insulin levels and, therefore, keeps blood sugar more balanced
- Calms the *Fight or Flight* nervous system triggered by stress, which then lowers blood pressure, calms our heart rate, and lessens the chance of a heart attack.
- It makes us less susceptible to colds and flu
- Keeps the hormone Leptin at adequate levels, which regulates appetite/satiety so we don’t overeat
- It helps prevent dementia since during deep sleep, cerebral-spinal fluid floods the brain, washing away and preventing the buildup of proteins in the brain linked to dementia [2]

Yes, SLEEP IS IMPORTANT. So, what do we need to do to sleep great?

First and foremost, we need to make it a priority. It is the universal foundation of health. Our exercise, healthy diet, memory function, and emotional well-being ALL rest upon the foundation of a consistent good night’s sleep.

You may need to make new, healthy sleep habits and drop some old, unhealthy ones.

We all know modifying old habits can be difficult! We love our comfortable habits – like watching TV or scrolling social media just before we close our eyes. And, we look forward all day to sitting down to dinner with a nice glass of wine!

We can still have comfort from a good story or a glass of wine – but in a healthier way.

What most people find works when changing habits is to make slow, steady changes over time. We do not recommend the *all-or-nothing* method. No one wants a shortcut to failure.

Instead of going to the extreme, think in terms of pulling back. Enjoy, but limit your wine with dinner. Try imbibing only on certain nights and see if there is a difference in how you sleep. Skip the news before bed and try a good book or magazine. If you use an electronic reader, make sure it is set to *warm light*.

Make the decision to do what it takes to get the benefits of quality sleep!

The Basics – Part 1: set your sleep schedule

Sleep quality is directly related to how consistent we are in sticking to our strict sleep schedule.

Research shows that we cannot repay our sleep debt from our workweek by sleeping more over the weekend. We end up not sleeping well on the weekend because we never feel that tired after all our catch-up sleep!

The Basics – Part 2: prepare the bedroom for sleep only!

Cool temperatures and total darkness are proven to improve sleep.

1. **Darkness** – no blue light (typical LED) or blue light from devices
2. **Temperature** – the slight drop in body temp after a warm shower signals the brain for sleep

A warm shower or bath is good as it relaxes our muscles, calms our nervous system, and helps our core temperature to drop slightly when we get into bed. This signals our brains to go into sleep mode. For those who run hot, there are even bed-cooling systems to keep you cool.

Sleeping in darkness means, ideally, you cannot see your own hand in front of your face. Cover your windows with black-out blinds or drapes, and cover all the little lights from light switches, appliances, and power strips. An eye cover or comfortable sleep mask may help as well.

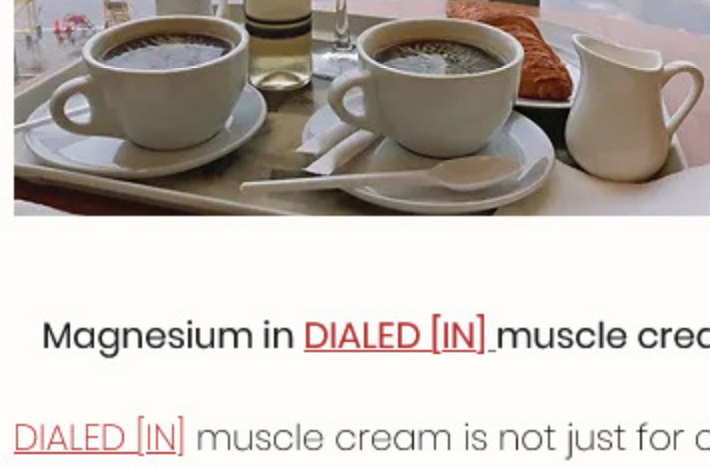
Pro tip: If you need a light for the bathroom at night, use a dim, warm-toned night light.

As you may have heard, the blue light emitted by most LED bulbs, TVs, and mobile devices signals the brain to wake up! As innocent as they seem, they can distort your brain’s understanding of whether to sleep or not to sleep.

The Basics – Part 3: The hard ask – pay attention to what goes into your body and mind before bed.

No one wants to change habits around food and alcohol. But, research has shown that we sleep better when we go to bed and are not too full or too hungry. Finding the right balance may take time, but it will help you sleep and stay asleep.

What? Caffeine has a SIX-HOUR half-life?



A cup of coffee or any caffeine at 12:00 noon means you will still have half of that amount in your system at 6:00 PM. Caffeine blocks the neurotransmitter adenosine from creating the feeling of sleepiness, AKA, *sleep pressure*. Meaning, it blocks the feeling of being tired or sleepy.

Magnesium in DIALED [IN] muscle cream helps us and our clients to sleep better.

DIALED [IN] muscle cream is not just for cramping and sore muscles; it is also regularly used to help our clients relax and get better sleep. They tell us rubbing it on their feet, legs, or the back of their necks helps them to relax. We encourage you to experiment with it.

Magnesium does many great things; one of them is to reduce the effects of cortisol, which can trigger our fight-or-flight stress reaction. Removing stress from the bedroom helps us relax and sleep!

Keep trying things and seeking solutions until your sleep is golden!

If you think there’s any possibility that you have sleep apnea, it’s good to rule that out right away. Or, if you’ve *tried everything* and still have no results, consider going deeper down the medical and/or the naturopathic path. We never know what will help our chemistry and environment until we try it.

Some people have great sleep after doing gentle yoga, guided meditation, or using essential oils like lavender. Others find that exercising at least four to six hours before bedtime works for them. Or you can try herbs like lemon balm or ashwagandha, which work well for many. A relaxing herbal tea like chamomile or sleepypime before bed is also worth trying.

If you’re searching for answers, quite often, a smartwatch like a Fitbit, with health and sleep monitoring capabilities, can give great clues into many of our body’s sleep-related functions. How much REM and deep sleep are you getting, for example?

My favorite is the *Smart Sleep Alarm* – an alarm on some smartwatches that wakes you at the ideal phase in your sleep cycle so you feel refreshed getting up!

Unfortunately, we live in a workaholic culture that can see sleeping as laziness. The boss can email you at 10:00 PM to write a report due the following morning.

Rather than live by those rules, let’s try living optimally, with plenty of time for the three pillars of self-care: exercise, a healthy diet, and sleep!

You will live a longer, healthier life, feeling better every day! It IS worth it!

PS: If you want to receive Kirk and Jenny’s free coaching/exercise tips, plus find out about special offers, sign up for the DIALED [IN] monthly newsletter:

Sign Up for our Newsletter [HERE](#)

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*For a DEEP dive into all things sleep, read the New York Times bestselling book on sleep, Matthew Walker’s *Why We Sleep* [3], or the National Library of Medicine’s article, *Healthy Sleep Every Day Keeps the Doctor Away* [4]

Footnotes:

1. <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/ss/slideshow-health-benefits-of-napping>

2. *Outlive*, Peter Attia, MD

3. *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* by Matthew Walker. | [Goodreads](#)

4. [Healthy Sleep Every Day Keeps the Doctor Away – PMC](#) – National Institute of Health, National Library of Medicine