



Getting a Good Night's Sleep

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We all know how great we feel after a good night's sleep, but did you know that our bodies actually need sleep to survive? Some of the benefits of sleep include repairing our bodies, increasing the health of our heart, reducing stress, improving memory and helping to maintain a healthy body weight. With so many powerful benefits, sleep may be your best ally in fighting stress.

Here are some pointers to help you get a good night's sleep:

- Establish a consistent sleep and waking schedule (even on weekends).
- Create a regular, relaxing bedtime routine, such as soaking in a hot bath or listening to soothing music.
- Create a sleep-conducive environment which is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillow.
- Use your bedroom only for sleeping and making love (no watching TV, using a computer, reading, or other activities in bed).
- Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your regular bedtime.
- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid caffeine, particularly in the evening.

How much sleep is optimal? Most studies have shown that an average adult requires seven to eight hours of sleep per night. However, this number varies widely. Only you can determine how much sleep you really need. Although some studies have suggested that getting too much sleep may be somewhat detrimental to your health, it is absolutely certain that too little sleep will increase your stress levels and can lead to a host of physical and emotional problems. If you've had an optimal amount of sleep you should feel refreshed, not groggy, in the morning and wake easily at your regular time.

Take the time to prepare for sleep in order to get the most benefit out of your time in bed. Make the space in your life to get the rest and recuperation you need. Let a good night's sleep melt your stress away and act as a gateway to better living.

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