

Better Sleep Solutions - Know the Truths & Tips to Stay Well-Rested



Most of us know the general reasons as to why we need restful sleep and how it impacts our daily lives. However, a lot of what we think we know comes from hear-say or what we were told growing up. In fact, most of what we know today about sleep, we've discovered in the past 25 years. So let's bring some myths out into the open and talk about the truths that research has shown.

Debunking Sleep Myths

Sleep in on the weekends to catch up on missed weeknight sleep.

TRUTH: Staying on a regular sleep/wake schedule is more helpful in aiding you in falling asleep at night.

A good workout in the evening will make you tired so you'll fall asleep faster.

TRUTH: While regular exercise does make it easier to fall asleep, you finish working out at least three hours before bedtime. Your body temperature rises during exercise and can take up to six hours to return to normal temperature. A cooler body makes it easier to fall asleep.

If you wake up in the middle of the night, it's best to lie still and try to fall back asleep. Getting up will only wake you up more.

TRUTH: Lying still "trying" to sleep can actually create stress, making you more anxious and causing you not to fall asleep. If you lie awake more than 15-20 minutes, get up, change your scenery and do something relaxing like reading or listening to music.

Retreating to your bedroom to watch television or read before bedtime to relax gets you "ready" to fall asleep.

TRUTH: It's recommended to only associate your bedroom with two activities - sleep and sex. Associating other activities with the bed or the bedroom can create a mental distraction from falling asleep.

You fall asleep faster when cozied up under warm, heavy blankets.

TRUTH: While you don't want to be cold, cooler temperatures do put the body into sleep mode quicker than warmth. If you need the covers, choose a squishy down comforter, then crack the window to let in fresh, cool air.

Enjoy a glass of wine at the end of the day to calm you down and help you fall sleep faster.

TRUTH: Alcohol can make you tired and put you to sleep faster, but you'll end up waking up frequently during the night resulting in fragmented sleep.

I can train myself to function with less sleep.

TRUTH: Chronic sleep deprivation causes your mental performance to decline. Not only do you lose the ability to focus, but you also have a greater likelihood of making mistakes and greater risk-taking behavior, which is not a good combination!

Sources: *Women's Health Magazine*,
(Infographic) *TIME Mobility/Qualcomm Poll 2012*

Follow these 5 simple tips to stay well-rested and functioning at your best.

1. Maintain a **regular bed and wake time schedule** including weekends.
2. Establish a **relaxing bedtime routine** such as hot shower or hot bath and then read a book or listen to soothing music. **TURN OFF** all tablets, smart phones, e-readers at least one hour before going to bed.
3. Create an environment that is **dark, quiet, comfortable and cool**. Also, if you have a partner that snores, invest in some earplugs!
4. **Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before bedtime** and avoid caffeine in the evenings.
5. **Exercise regularly**. It is best to complete your workout several hours before going to bed.

Sources: CDC, National Sleep Foundation

Where Our Phones Sleep

Nearly three-quarters of young people fall asleep each night with their phones within reach. That number tapers off in middle-age and decreases in the 65+ category, where people are equally likely to sleep with their phone in another room. Using a phone before bed has been shown to interfere with length and quality of sleep.

