

Get a Good Night's Sleep

The Secret to Better Fitness

By Jennifer Salter, MSW

Everyone knows how fabulous they feel after a good night's rest. But how many of us consistently get enough sleep? Proper sleep not only makes us feel better, it enhances memory and cognition, immune functioning and tissue repair. Studies have linked insufficient amounts of sleep to heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, weight gain, Parkinson's disease and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.



The National Sleep Foundation in the United States maintains that seven to nine hours of sleep for adult human beings is optimal, and that sufficient sleep optimizes alertness, memory, problem solving, overall health, as well as reducing the risk of accidents. A widely publicized 2003 study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine demonstrated that cognitive performance declines with six or fewer hours of sleep.

It has been found that a lack of sleep can more than double the risk of death from cardiovascular disease, but that too much sleep can also double the risk of death. It is possible that too much sleep is linked to co-occurring variables, such as depression or fatigue that results from serious illness. In terms of prevention, findings indicate that consistently sleeping around seven hours at night is optimal. ➔

THROW AWAY YOUR EXCUSES AND VISIT AREA FITNESS - A NEW BOUTIQUE GYM WITH NO ANNUAL CONTRACT COMMITMENT

AREA



area fitness

258 The Esplanade Toronto ON M5A 4J6
t. 647.427.3582 info@areaonline.ca
areaonline.ca

ALSO AVAILABLE: PERSONAL TRAINING • CYCLING CLASSES • YOGA CLASSES

Sleep is also essential for tissue repair and recovery. Individuals who suffer from fibromyalgia, a syndrome characterized by systemic, chronic muscle pain, spend little time in delta sleep. Delta sleep is the deepest stage of the sleep cycle, when human growth hormone is released and our bodies heal themselves. Each sleep cycle is two hours long, and we require three to four cycles per night. Losing sleep translates into lost opportunities for recovery from everything from back pain to sore knees!

A lack of sleep also impairs immunity. Sleep deprivation of 24 hours can decrease white blood cell counts by 20 percent or more! By taking care to get enough sleep, you boost your body's ability to fight off colds, flu and other infections. In addition, you prevent getting sidelined by annoying ailments in the first place. Also, because many cancers are linked to immune system malfunction, its stands to reason that chronic sleep shortage may lead to an increased risk of cancer diagnosis. It is well-known that women who do nightshift work have a 60 percent increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Jennifer Salter, MSW,

~ is the director of Lifeline Personal Training, a personal fitness training and consulting practice serving midtown and downtown Toronto. www.lifelinepersonaltraining.com.

Recommendations: Insomnia is rampant in our society. Severe insomnia should be treated by a physician or naturopathic doctor. Here are some tips to get your much-needed rest:

1. Retire substantially before midnight, so you don't lose a sleep cycle. Moreover, we have more trouble falling asleep when we are overtired, just like small children do. *You cannot make up for lost night sleep by taking a daytime nap!*
2. Go to bed at approximately the same time every night.
3. Spend an hour before bed unwinding – take a cool bath or shower (to lower your body temperature), drink some relaxing chamomile tea, have a light carbohydrate snack, read, dim the lights. Move more slowly. Avoid stimulating activities like exercise, going up and down stairs more than necessary, engaging conversations, television and the computer.
4. Turn off your Blackberry / iPhone!!!
5. Sleep in a very dark room. If this is not possible, wear eye shades.
6. Keep the temperature cool where you sleep.
7. Do not drink large amounts of liquid before bedtime.
8. Exercise in the late afternoon - this has been shown to improve night sleep!

Retreat to
HEALTHY LIVING
in Barbados

Change the Rest of Your Life in Seven Days

Retreat to Healthy Living is a seven day women's health retreat, an exclusive experience geared towards loving and living your life to the fullest.

For seven days our expert trainers, nutritionist and holistic practitioners will guide you towards a healthier state and achieving balance in your life.

Only 30 spots are available for this exclusive Women's Health & Fitness Getaway.

Reserve now at www.asu-wish.com



JOIN TWO TIME OLYMPIC CHAMPION CATRIONA LE MAY DOAN FOR A RETREAT TO HEALTHY LIVING

in Barbados

