



The Restonic Goodnight Guide



SAY GOODNIGHT TO INSOMNIA

The kitchen may be the heartbeat of a happy, healthy home but your bedroom is its soul. Your bed is (or should be) the most comfortable place in your home and the envoy of lots of good things, including sound, healing sleep. It's the place where you greet your days and where you wave farewell to them. It's where you cuddle and canoodle with your lover, your children and/or your pets.

Trouble is, many of us play fast and loose with sleep, answering emails and checking social media from bed – getting one more thing done before lights out. We interrupt our sleep with an alarm clock and struggle to set the world right with behemoth cups of coffee.

But is cheating on sleep wrecking our health?

Why sleep matters

During sleep, your body works hard to repair damaged tissues, manufacture life-sustaining hormones and catalogue memories from the previous day. Skimp on sleep and your ability to handle stress (physical, mental and emotional) and learn a new skill is severely diminished. People who sleep less than 6 hours a night don't spend enough time in the deepest stages of sleep and are at higher risk of heart attacks and strokes than those who clock at least 7 hours.

When it comes to how long you're going to live, there's a lot of truth in the saying that genetics is a loaded gun – but your environment is the trigger. You may carry genes for a multitude of diseases, but whether you get them or not is largely dependent on how you live your life.

If you want to live longer, sleep is your best defense...

Instead of an 8-hour sentence in a void of nothingness, sleep may actually be the magic bullet to a longer life.

We've been making mattresses for more than 75 years and we know a thing or two about sleep. But we also know mattresses aren't miracles. If you don't make time for sleep, even the best mattress in the world won't help you get and stay healthy.

**SLEEP IS A NIGHTLY EVENT, NOT A TASK.
AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE TIME FOR IT.**

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Understanding your sleep cycle

During sleep, your heart rate slows, body temperature dips and your brain undergoes complex changes in activity. If you were to have an EEG (electroencephalogram) while you sleeping, your reading would look something like this:

- **Stage 1 – Your eyes are closed and you’re just beginning your journey. You are easy to wake and there is no eye movement.**
- **Stage 2 – You are well into your journey and would be harder to rouse but not yet in a deep sleep.**
- **Stage 3 – Although still no eye movement, you are in a deep enough sleep that waking you now would leave you disoriented.**
- **Stage 4 – Known as REM sleep, this stage of sleep shows brain activity similar to being awake. Cycling in and out of this stage of sleep is where dreaming is believed to take place.**

All four stages of sleep last approximately 1 ½ hours and it’s believed we cycle through all multiple times per night. Waking in the middle of a cycle can leave us feeling tired.

Sleep is controlled by our circadian rhythm, a built-in 24 hour clock that manages all of our biological and physiological process. This clock is sensitive to environmental changes and helps us adapt.

Before electricity, our circadian rhythm allowed us to rise earlier in the summer and spring and later in the winter when the days were shorter. Today, our circadian rhythm is often at odds with fast-paced schedules – but we still feel it. After 15 hours of being awake, the pressure to sleep grows so strong and we’re so drowsy, we begin to act as if intoxicated.



Quirky & weird sleep trivia

Why do we sleep? It might sound like a silly question, but the truth is that even scientists don't know all the reasons we sleep. While we tackle a lot of serious sleep issues on our Sleep Blog, this post is a little taste of sleep trivia – quirky and somewhat weird facts about sleep that will entertain you but not necessarily help you understand sleep any better.

- [Tony Wright](#) claims to hold the world record for sleep deprivation, staying awake for 266 hours in 2007. The Guinness Book of World Records rejected his claim (and all claims on sleep deprivation after 1990) due to possible health risks (including death).
- Our minds incorporate sounds and smells around us when we're dreaming. If you're napping while someone's cooking lasagna, you might start dreaming you're dining at an Italian restaurant.
- According to a 2013 report from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), 4 % of Americans use prescription sleep aids, with the drug being more commonly used among women and older adults. Visit [LiveScience.com](#) to learn more.
- Everyone dreams 4 to 7 times each and every night. Everyone. If you can't remember them, you're not alone. Most people forget 90% of their dreams.
- Do blind people dream? "When you're asleep, your brain processes the experiences you've had while awake and builds dreams out of them. If you can see, your dreams contain a number of images and visual memories; if you can't see, your dreams contain more sounds and tactile experiences. For example, a sighted person dreaming about the beach probably sees the sand and the ocean, and a blind person dreams about the breaking of the waves, the smell of the ocean and the feeling of sand between his or her toes," according to [Discovery.com](#).
- Somniphobia is the fear of sleep.
- Waking up multiple times during the night is normal. Some studies suggest we wake up as many as 8 times throughout the night as we cycle between light and deep sleep.
- Our dreams don't create faces – we dream about what we've already seen (if only for a second).



- More than 80% of people under 30 dream in color. If you want to hold onto your Technicolor dreams as you age, watching color TV can help, according to [Gizmodo](#).
- Falling asleep takes an average of 10-20 minutes. Falling asleep too quickly may be a sign of sleep deprivation.
- Dreams can be an emotional rollercoaster, cycling through your feelings of the past day. The most common emotion is anxiety, which begs the question – why are we all so stressed?
- Pulling an all-nighter to finish a report or study for an exam? Not sleeping for 16 hours can make you behave as if you have a blood alcohol level of .05%.
- Throughout an average night, you'll cycle into deep REM sleep approximately every 90 minutes. At each point, a burst of electrical activity streams through your brain, which is also the time you're most likely to dream.
- Ever fall asleep and wake up with a sudden jolt seconds later. That action is called a myoclonic jerk.
- **Blind people** often struggle with sleep because they have no perception of light. Their circadian rhythm (internal clock) lacks the ability to match up a night and day cycle.
- Full moon? Some studies suggest that the full moon robs us of a good night's sleep. Even if your sleep is restricted to windowless rooms free of environmental and time-based cues, such as those found in a sleep lab, your sleep is likely to be shorter and interrupted more, according to [ScientificAmerican.com](#).
- How much sleep do you need? Studies show that people who sleep between 6.5 hr. and 7.5 hr. a night, live the longest. People who sleep more than 8 hr. or less than 6.5 hr. don't live quite as long. Read more at [Time.com](#).

If you live to be 75 years old, you'll have spent approximately 25 years sleep – 6 of those years will be jam-packed with dreams.

How to get the worst night's sleep

In many ways, sleep is a lot like your morning commute. Even when armed with a full tank of gas, allow ample time and the right gear, you're (sometimes) still at the mercy of traffic congestion and accidents. It's the same way with sleep - some nights will be smoother than others.

Considering that more than a third of us struggle to find a good night's sleep, it's clear we're not exactly achieving success in the sleep department. In fact, some of us have become pros at not sleeping. Think I'm joking? Log onto Facebook or Twitter and count how many of your friends brag about how little they slept the night before. Since when did sleep deprivation evolve from torture to a badge of honor?

Setting the stage for tired mornings...

If you're tired (pardon the pun) of missing out on the non-sleeping competition that's taking place online and in office everywhere, listen up. We've gathered 7 cheats to get you to the top of the [worst night's sleep](#) competition. Using just one of these will set you up for success. Use all of them and you may even achieve super elite non-sleeper status.

For those about to not-sleep, we salute you.

Adopt loosey goosey bedroom rules - Go to bed at a different time every night. Store your phone face-up beside your bed, leaving the ringer on high, text and social media notifications turned on as well. While you're at it, install a TV in the bedroom and fall asleep with it on each night.

Don't slow down until you fall down - No need to read quietly or soak in the tub before bed. Pick a fight with your spouse or kids later in the evening to drive your blood pressure up to ensure relaxation is far from reach.

Drink to excess nightly - A drink with dinner may help you uncoil from the day's stress but maybe you'd like another before bed. Go ahead and indulge. Drinking before bed might help you fall asleep but it's a sure-fire way to guarantee a midnight wake-up call too.

Take sleep medication - Sure there's been lots written lately about the dangerous morning-after effects of [sleep aides](#) but pay no heed. On second thought, as a pro non-sleeper, this one goes against your goal so think twice before indulging.



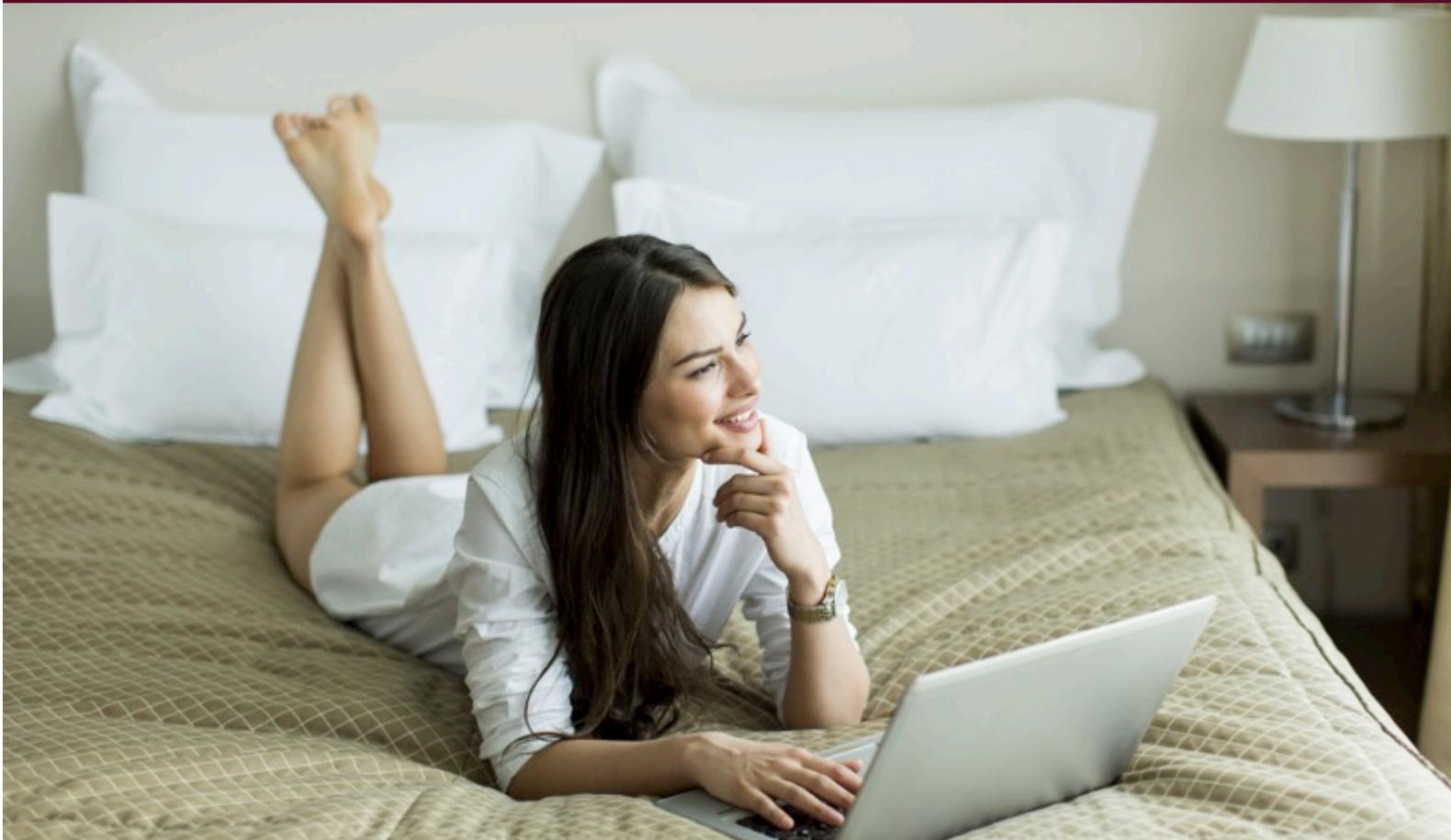
Exercise before bed – Sleep experts say strenuous exercise 3 hours before bed can make it hard for your body to relax into sleep. Sign up for a boxing class or plan your marathon training later in the evening. Skip the shower before bed for bonus points.

Watch scary shows on TV – Make some popcorn and watch back to back Homeland and Mentalist episodes before bed. You'll be ~~sleeping~~ sitting on the edge of your bed all night – literally.

Ignore your old mattress – If you want to be a pro non-sleeper, ignore your lumpy, sagging mattress (and the back pain it causes). “Similar to your favorite old chair or worn pair of shoes, your mattress can still feel somewhat comfortable long after it has lost its ability to provide your body with the proper support and comfort it needs,” advises the [Better Sleep Council](#).

Follow these 7 strategies and you're guaranteed to enjoy a restless night spent staring at the clock. And when you log onto Facebook next, you'll have your own bragging rights to share with your friends. Sweet, right?

If, on the other hand, you're actively seeking a good night's sleep, read our “7 Strategies for a GREAT Night's Sleep.”



7 surprising effects of sleep deprivation

If you think sleep is a waste of time, here's a sneak peek at your future self...

Lack of sleep makes you dumb

During sleep, our brains sort and store memories from the day, making room for new experiences heading our way tomorrow. Think of sleep as the clean-up crew for the pathways in the brain. When we don't get the sleep we need our brains start to look like Walmart toy aisles after Black Friday. Forgetting where you put your glasses today is nothing compared to what your future brain will forget.

And sad...

Sleep and depression have an unholy alliance. People who are depressed often suffer from insomnia and vice versa. According to the [National Sleep Foundation](#), "Insomnia is very common among depressed patients. Evidence suggests that people with insomnia have a ten-fold risk of developing depression compared with those who sleep well."

And ugly...

In 2010, the [British Medical Journal](#) released a study that showed how our looks change when we're sleep deprived - and how others see that in our faces. "Our findings show that sleep-deprived people appear less healthy, less attractive and more tired compared with when they are well rested," wrote researchers. "This suggests that humans are sensitive to sleep-related facial cues."

Better buy some expando pants

During sleep, our bodies produce hormones that keep appetites in check. When we don't get the sleep we need, we crave salty, sweet foods - remember those all-nighters in college? If you sleep less than six hours a night, you're more likely to become obese than someone who sleeps more than 7 hours a night. Imagine yourself 20 or 30 or 40 pounds heavier - reason enough to go to bed early tonight?

Say goodbye to your sex drive

Both men and women report the death of their libidos after long-term sleep loss. [Dr. La Puma](#) says, "Testosterone, in men and women, helps build strength, muscle mass and bone density, as well as revving up your sex drive. During the day testosterone levels naturally drop and they're replenished at night while we sleep."



For guys, the story gets worse. The heavier you are, the more estrogen you produce. Talk about an emasculating cycle.

Say hello to high blood pressure, heart disease, a heart attack

There's no easy way to say this so we'll just throw it out there. Denying our bodies the sleep we need is literally breaking our hearts. According to some estimates, 90% of people who suffer with insomnia, also have one of these health conditions:

- Heart disease, heart attack & heart failure
- Irregular heartbeat
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Diabetes

Make sure your will is up to date

Now that you know sleep deprivation can drive up medical bills as you age, it's time for the really bad news. It can also kill you. When we're tired, we lose the ability to make smart decisions, which leads to traffic accidents and workplace mishaps – both of which can be fatal.

Is the cost of a good night's sleep higher than you expected?
How will you change how you sleep?



9 reasons to sleep more

What about the amazing benefits that are yours for the taking when you do get the sleep you need? After all, wouldn't you rather hear about the rewards for a change?

Maintain a healthy weight

Mattress manufacturers should consider giving away a free bathing suit with every purchase. Think we're crazy? As wild as the idea sounds, substantial medical evidence suggests fascinating links between sleep and weight. According to [WebMD.com](#), "Researchers say that how much you sleep and quite possibly the quality of your sleep may silently orchestrate a symphony of hormonal activity tied to your appetite."

Manage stressful situations better

Some stress is good for us – like date night with your partner or accepting an award for a job well done. But some [stress](#) has the power to turn us into impatient toddlers, especially if we didn't get a good night's sleep. If you're averaging four to five hours sleep a night, your brain reacts to stress as if you've gone for three consecutive nights without any sleep. Imagine the power you'll have the next time your boss wigs out and you've had a good night's sleep...

Reduce inflammation and pain

[Heart disease](#), stroke, diabetes, arthritis and premature aging all have strong ties to inflammation. If you sleep less than six hours a night, your blood levels of inflammatory proteins may be higher than people who sleep more. Show your heart some love – put it to bed.

Enjoy physical activity

When's the last night you had a terrible night's sleep and bounced out of bed in the morning, energized and ready for a 10K run? We thought so. Sleep is the mop-up crew for your brain and body, cleaning up spills, reorganizing memories and [repairing muscle tissue](#). Skip that important recovery time and you look more like the energizer bunny who didn't make the cut.

Avoid accidents

In 2009, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that sleepy drivers are responsible for the most single car crashes – even more than alcohol. What's downright sobering though is that even one sleep deprived night can impair your driving, mimicking the effects of an alcoholic drink.



Embrace lifelong learning

Just as sleep repairs muscle tissue, it also cleans out the synapses in your brain. Sleep facilitates the processing of memories, moving the important ones to storage and discarding the ones you won't need tomorrow. Without sleep, your memories all stay in the short term retrieval area and learning complex skills becomes nearly impossible. So in essence, that 8-hour void of doing nothing other than sleep actually makes you smarter.

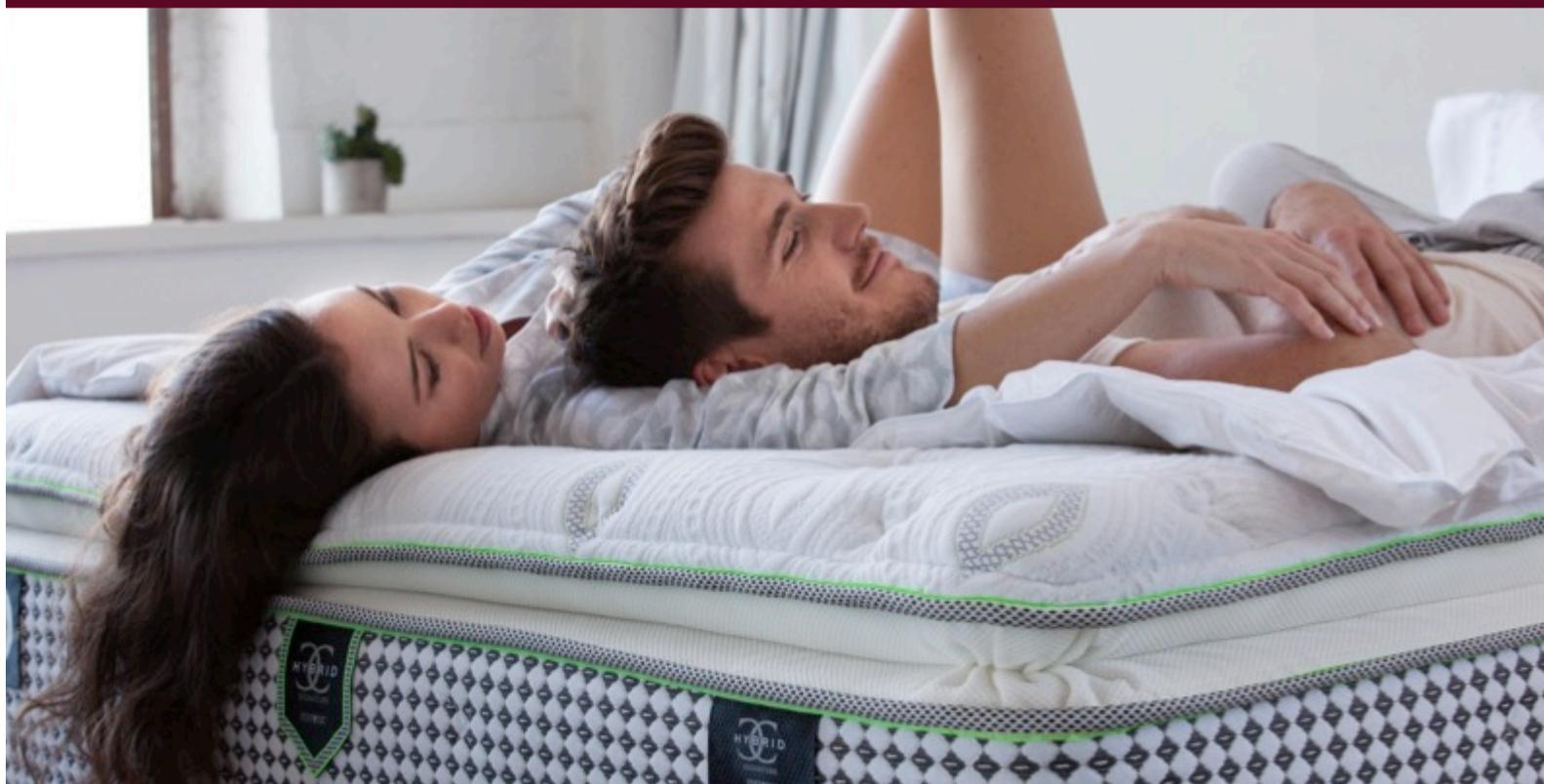
Fight depression

The relationship between sleep and depressive illness is complex – depression may cause sleep problems and sleep problems may cause or contribute to depressive disorders. But the evidence is clear: people with insomnia have a ten-fold risk of developing depression compared with those who sleep well, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Enjoy more creativity

Ever notice how creativity ebbs and flows during the day? Depending on whether you're a night hawk or early bird, you'll enjoy spurts of creativity throughout the day – when your brain is most awake and energized. Without sleep, your brain lacks the fuel it needs to get into that creative zone. All work and no play make Jack a dull boy – without sleep, he's really a drag.

Now you know the amazing benefits of a good night's sleep. Will you be tucking in early tonight?



How much sleep does your family need?

As we age, our sleep needs change. A study released from MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC) in Massachusetts found that sleep deprivation at ANY point during infancy and early childhood can have a dramatic impact on body fat by the time a child reaches 7 years old. Ensure your children aren't starting out life sleep deprived and heading toward obesity.

Do you make sleep a family priority?

Teaching your kids the importance of sleep sets them up for a healthy future. Stop cheating yourself – and your family – out of a good night's sleep and start respecting your need for it.

Set your alarm for bedtime

Our bodies need consistency – it's one of the reasons we eat 3 meals a day. Your sleep routine is no different. Teach your kids that going to bed at the same time is as important as waking up at the same time.

- Set an alarm for when it's time to go to bed
- Establish a **bedtime routine** like bathing, teeth-brushing and story time
- Avoid conflict before bed – save heavy discussions for morning or hold them earlier in the evening

Age	Recommended amount of sleep (24 hour period)
Newborns	16-18 hours
Preschool-aged children	11-12 hours
School-aged children	At least 10 hours
Teens	9-10 hours
Adults (including elderly)	7-8 hours



Create a cool sleep environment

When we're overheated or chilled, our body readjusts by sweating or shivering. If we're sleeping when that happens, rest is disturbed. Eliminate temperature variances by sleeping in a well-ventilated, cool bedroom.

- Set the thermostat a few degrees lower at night
- Crack open the window or use fans to keep air circulating
- Wear pajamas that are made from lighter, breathable fabrics
- Consider a mattress that helps regulate temperature to prevent overheating

Make the night last longer

Some of us are night owls and others are early birds but we all need darkness to sleep – it's just part of being human. Trouble is, our electronic devices can confuse our brains and make our brains think it's time to wake-up when it's really time for bed.

- Shut off all screens one hour before bedtime for everyone in the family
- Buy a low-glow alarm clock so the room stays mostly dark throughout the night
- Ensure everyone in the family has blackout curtains on the windows
- Place nightlights in the hall and bathroom so a midnight bio-break doesn't wake-up the brain

Practice the fine art of napping

We all have days when we're just not at our best. Enter the glorious nap. Your kids might hate naps but you'll all feel better at dinnertime when everyone's well-rested and not grumpy. If napping's a new concept to your family, check out Greg's tips for getting best nap of your life. You're welcome.



Do you have a sleeping disorder?

Sleep affects everything from how our body functions to our moods to our relationships. Good sleep habits can slow your body's aging process, improve your heart health and provide stress relief. But just because you tuck into bed every night doesn't mean you're getting the sleep you need – or that you even know how much sleep you need to stay healthy.

We all have the occasional night of restlessness or sleep cut short, whether it's from an overdue report, a sick child or stress within your family. But when your **lack of shut-eye** becomes a habit, it's time to get medical advice.

5 warning signs you may need to see a sleep doctor

1. You're awake when everyone else is sleeping

Short-term insomnia is normal but struggling night after night for months on end is not. Studies show that many people with insomnia don't seek help because they think it's just the way they're wired or that it will go away eventually. The truth is that your brain can learn bad sleep habits – and it can unlearn them too. A sleep doctor can help with suggestions to help **improve your sleep habits**, therapy or medication.

2. You need to sleep during the day

We all struggle with a mid-afternoon slump once in a while – but every day is not normal. If you find yourself nodding during routine activities, such as driving, it's time to rethink your sleep schedule. The fix might be as easy as getting to bed earlier or installing black-out shades or buying a **new mattress**. But it might also mean it's time make a doctor's appointment.

3. You snore

Snoring isn't always a problem – other than the fact that it keeps your partner awake. But snoring can also be a sign of sleep apnea, a disorder that's characterized by pauses in breathing. In extreme cases, sleep apnea can lead to early death.

If you're concerned you might have sleep apnea, these resources will help:

[National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute \(NIH\)](#)

[Mayo Clinic](#)

[WebMD](#)



4. You wake up tired

A typical sleep cycle lasts approximately 90 minutes and alternates between light and deep (REM) sleep, allowing your body and mind to repair itself from the previous day. If you progress normally through the different stages of sleep, you should wake up well-rested and ready to take on the day. If you wake up consistently tired, there's a good chance you're missing the deep, healing stages of sleep.

5. You have other medical issues

Not being able to sleep can be a sign that something else is going on – a medical condition developing in the background. **Insomnia**, unfortunately, can also be a frustrating by-product of some medications. If you're dealing with depression, chronic pain or restless leg syndrome getting a good night's sleep will almost certainly be a challenge. If sleeplessness is affecting your daily activities, consult a **sleep doctor**.



Do you know what's normal and what signals a potentially serious sleep disorder? Take **Dr. Oz's Sleep Quiz** and test your sleep intelligence.



Do you need a sleep doctor?

Sleep deprivation is not a badge of honor, it's a trend that's causing irreparable damage to your long-term health, says James B. Maas, Ph.D., author of *Sleep for Success!* on [Business Insider](#). "You can become conditioned to waking up earlier but you can't alter your body's sleep requirements... over time, some aspect of your health like weight or mental focus will be affected by lack of sleep."

If lack of sleep has become your new frienemy (someone you think is a friend but hurts more than she helps), it's time to seek professional help.

Sleep disorder warning signs

If you spend your nights gasping, choking or stopping breathing and struggle with oppressive daytime sleepiness, there may be an underlying medical issue causing your sleep deprivation. It can be tricky to know when to seek medical help but if you've tried self-help sleep remedies with no success, it's time to consult your family doctor. Ask yourself the following questions about your sleep. Do you:

- Feel sluggish and lazy most days?
- Feel emotionally out of control often?
- Fall asleep at random times during the day?
- Nap often and feel exhausted when you can't nap?
- Fail to remember simple things in the short term?
- Wrestle with concentration on simple tasks at work, school or home?
- Struggle to stay awake when you're sitting quietly watching television or reading?

Before you visit a sleep doctor, track your sleep quality and patterns with a journal or sleep tracker, like [FitBit](#). The more information you present your doctor with, the faster you'll get the help you need. And remember, a sleep disorder like insomnia might be a symptom of another medical condition, which is why it's important to consult a doctor if you think you have a problem.



How to find a sleep specialist

The following links will help you find a board certified sleep specialist.

[American Academy of Sleep Medicine \(AASM\)](#)

An organization of doctors and researchers dedicated to the advancement of sleep research and medicine. You'll find a list of accredited **sleep centers**, many of which have certified behavioral sleep medicine specialists with expertise in behavioral and cognitive methods to prevent and treat sleep problems.

[American Board of Sleep Medicine \(ABSM\)](#)

The American Board of Sleep Medicine certifies doctors and researchers in sleep medicine, which makes it easier for patients to find "board certified" specialists. The ABSM works with AASM to maintain their list Board Certified Sleep Specialists by state or name. If you're looking for a specific doctor, their **searchable database** will help.

[American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine \(AADSM\)](#)

It's not unusual for your dentist to spot a health issue before your family doctor – mostly because we visit our dentists more often. Dentists interested in treating sleep disorders with oral appliances are often members of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (formerly the Sleep Disorders Dental Society). To find a dentist in your area who specializes in sleep health, consult **AADSM's searchable directory**.

Curious about how sleep governs your health? The following resources will fill you up on helpful sleep information you can use tonight.

- **[American Sleep Apnea Association](#)** – Founded in 1990, ASAA is a non-profit organization that promotes awareness of sleep apnea, works for continuing improvements in treatments for this serious disease, and advocates for the interests of sleep apnea patients.
- **[ShareCare.com](#)** – Ask, learn and act with articles, answers, health assessments, videos, blogs and programs to live your healthiest life. **[Dr. Oz](#)** and **[Oprah](#)** are founding partners of ShareCare.
- **[National Sleep Foundation](#)** – A non-profit organization charged with improving health and well-being through sleep education and advocacy.



- [WebMD](#) – Whether it’s a specific health condition, or if you’re looking for a healthier lifestyle, WebMD has a smorgasbord of experts writing and commenting on a wide range of health issues.
- [Mayo Clinic](#) – A trusted resource in the medical industry for more than 150 years.
- [Better Sleep Council](#) – Established in 1979, the BSC is a non-profit organization devoted to educating the public about the importance of sleep and about the value of the mattress in pursuit of a good night’s sleep.

Healthy sleep is vital to good health. If you’re not getting the sleep you need, it’s time to seek help.



Reduce stress, sleep better

Stress is a fixture of our lives – some of it good, some of it strong enough to hurt us. You know the kind we're talking about. That tightness that begins in your gut and travels to your fingernails and earlobes like an electric snake. It makes us snap at our loved ones and in some cases, leaves us sobbing and unable to make a rational decision.

Chronic stress can make you feel like you're in the middle of a never-ending marathon, causing adrenaline and cortisol rushes and a constant racing heart. Many of us rush through our days overloaded, overwhelmed and overstimulated but, to be honest, chasing a good night's sleep is futile.

Sleep requires a slowing down, a quieting of the mind and body

So how do you slow down, de-stress and sleep better? There's no one answer that will work for everyone but a few tweaks to your sleep schedule may help you slow your pace and catch a better night's sleep.

Put stress to bed first – Journaling and meditating can help put stress in a corner so you can focus on more positive thoughts. After journaling, give yourself permission to let the journal be the keeper of your stress for the night. I've done this for years and the physical act of shutting my journal is often enough to allow me to finally loosen my shoulders for the night.

Slow your evenings – Slowing your evening helps prepare your body for sleep. Dr. Breus advises people to set an [electronic curfew](#), “try limiting your use before bedtime and put the computer and phone to bed in another room and see if that helps. If you have a teenager in the house, try to limit their use of their cell phones as much as possible before bedtime.”

Create ambiance – When the lights dim at the theatre, the audience quiets. To prepare your body for sleep, dim the lights, sit in a comfortable chair and read or talk quietly. Repeat this process nightly and your body will begin to learn and appreciate the cues. Just make sure you don't fall asleep in the chair – that's a recipe for a sore back in the morning.

Exercise – A former co-worker of mine suffered from debilitating depression and while he used medication to help him control it, exercise was his best friend. He often told me how it was his true happy place and that skipping exercising meant skipping



sleep that night too. Just make sure you exercise earlier in the day so have time to slow down before bed.

Make mindful food & drink choices – We love our morning coffee, but too much of it later in the day can interfere with sleep. Same is true for alcohol – it might help you fall asleep but it will also wake you up more often during the night. Junk food and refined sugars can trigger the same sleep issues as well.

See a sleep doctor – We’ve been making mattresses for more than 75 years and know a thing or two about getting a good night’s sleep. But we’re the first to admit not all sleep issues can be solved with a new mattress. If sleeplessness is frequent and impairs your ability to enjoy your life, it’s time to get medical help for diagnosis.

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Sleepblog



Coffee, sleep & you

Can't decide whether to fill your favorite mug with coffee or tea this morning? Ask a health-conscious friend about coffee and sleep and you may hear a laundry list of reasons why coffee is evil incarnate. Trouble is, ask another friend and you'll be showered with the glorious hidden health benefits of this miracle drink.

Coffee has been linked to improved memory recall and has been cited as a strong defender against Alzheimer's, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's and breast, rectal and colon cancers. As well, it's thought to ease asthma attacks and reduce flare-ups of gout.

But it may also cause restlessness, insomnia and anxiety...

Sorting out the coffee conundrum

If you're a coffee person, giving up your morning cup-a-joe may be too high a price for better sleep. While no one can tell you exactly how much coffee is safe before life with less sleep is your reality, research is helping us understand what constitutes sensible consumption.

The perks of coffee drinks

Anything this good must be bad. We crave it. We guzzle it. Drinking coffee makes us feel good — better able to handle an overbearing boss or an unruly pack of toddlers. But then... we feel guilty about it, suspecting that sooner or later, it's going to do us in. In reality, it's not the guilty pleasure everyone makes it out to be — in fact, caffeine side effects can do you good. Read more on WomensHealth.com.

Coffee and health – what does the research say?

Coffee has a long history of being blamed for many ills — from the humorous "It will stunt your growth" to the not-so-humorous claim that it causes heart disease and cancer. But recent research indicates that coffee may not be so bad after all. So which is it — good or bad? The best answer may be that for most people the health benefits outweigh the risks. Read more at MayoClinic.org.

Say no to coffee after noon

Your morning mug gets a pass, but guzzling it all day is a big no-no. Here's why: It's often said that caffeine has a half-life of about five hours—which means if you eat an early enough dinner, that after-supper cappuccino should be out of your system by bedtime, right? Unfortunately, that's not quite right. After seven hours, much of the stimulant will be gone from your system, depending on your sensitivity to it—but 25% of it could still be there. Read more at Prevention.com.



Why you sleep like crap

Is your evening shuteye paying the price for that afternoon cup of coffee? “Morning people” (those who say they’re productive in the a.m.) who consume caffeine throughout their day are more likely to have trouble sleeping compared to late risers, says a recent study published in the journal *Sleep*. Read more at MensHealth.com.

The mind-blowing science of sleep

Sleep is way more important than we realize. It’s also, according to David Randall author of *Dreamland: Adventures in the Strange Science of Sleep*, “the largest overlooked part of your life and ... it affects you even if you don’t have a sleep problem.” It is obviously not a good idea to drink coffee in the evening if it keeps you up at night. Read more at BusinessInsider.com.



Would you change when you drink coffee if you knew it was robbing you of a good night’s sleep?



Sleep & the battle of the sexes

Sleep is a basic human need – but do men and women sleep differently? Does she need more sleep than him? She's still tired after 7 hours of sleep but he's revitalized and ready to take on the day. She's hot. He's not. There's still so much we don't know about sleep and how gender affects our ability to get a good night's sleep. But one thing we know for sure is that we all need it and when we don't get enough, we suffer.



Competitive tiredness between men and women

Arianna Huffington says sleep is the next feminist issue, stating that lack of sleep affects a woman's judgment, creativity and ability to realize her full potential. Men could argue that they suffer from **sleep deprivation** too and are more prone to sleep apnea at a younger age. But women have different struggles than men as they progress through monthly hormonal fluctuations as well as the hormonal challenges of pregnancy and menopause.



Do women really need more sleep than men?

“Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night but women need slightly more than men,” says Dr. La Puma. “We’re so used to coping with sleep deprivation in our culture but men tend to power through their tiredness while women are more prone to depression.”

In terms of gender differences, research suggests women get more sleep on average. But men wake up more during the night, perhaps because of their greater risk for obstructive sleep apnea.

For both sexes, we progress through different stages of sleep at night, allowing the brain to repair and ready itself for the next day. “Sleep lays the groundwork for the next day, planning and sorting through thoughts of the previous day while you sleep,” says Dr. La Puma. “Think of sleep as your background day planner.”

As we age, gender differences take a back seat to how our sleep responds to the natural aging process. Whether you’re a man or a woman, insufficient sleep on a regular basis increases your risk of serious health issues like diabetes, depression and cardiovascular disease.

How men’s partners can help reduce sleep deprivation risks

When it comes to sleep, there’s one clear gender difference that doesn’t change with age. When sleep issues arise between sleep partners, women are the ones to drag their partner to a [professional sleep doctor](#) first.

“Men’s partners have a big role to play in helping with stress/sleep/weight management,” says Dr. La Puma. “They don’t have to have a medical degree to play the diagnostician.”

Sleep partners can be the voice of reason when it comes to [sleep issues](#) because they’re often the one lying awake, listening to the snoring and watching the clock. Dr. La Puma suggests they can help their partners figure this out by talking about medication, illness, sleep environment, too much stimulation in the bedroom (like TV or computer). From there, consulting a sleep doctor is an easier discussion because now both partners understand the frustration and the cause of it



How women sleep differently than men and why it matters

Women take longer to fall asleep. They report feeling more sleepiness. They have an increased risk of insomnia. And they even spend more time in deep sleep, compared to men. But the understanding of why sex differences in sleep exist -- and how these differences may affect treatment -- lags far behind, according to a new report from the Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR). Read more on [HuffPost Healthy Living](#).

Cuddle buddies? What sleep says about your relationship

Your sleeping habits are a great way to gauge how well your relationship is going? According to a recent study by the University of Hertfordshire, a direct correlation exists between physical and emotional intimacy – 94% of couples who touch while sleeping said they were happy, while only 68 % of couples who didn't touch while snoozing expressed being satisfied with their relationship. Read more on [YourTango.com](#).

Sleep – the key to a long-term, loving relationship

Sleep can pose a number of challenges to relationships. The tossing and turning of insomnia and the noisy, disrupted sleep of snoring and sleep apnea don't just diminish the quality of sleep for the individuals with the disorder. They also rob partners of restful sleep. Night owls and larks who share a bed may also have difficulty marrying their sleep schedules. If you're an early-to-bed, early-to-rise type, having a partner who likes to read or watch television late into the night can interfere with sleep. A new study suggests that **poor sleep may contribute to a lack of appreciation between romantic partners**. Read more on [PsychologyToday.com](#).

The couple's handbook for sleeping together

Is two a crowd? Sleeping in a pose that lets you both stay comfortable and also allows for body contact helps strengthen your bond. Try these four sleeping positions, which will let you snuggle up and sleep better all night long. Read more on [WomensHealth.com](#).



Men, sleep & testosterone

Since 1993, sales of prescription testosterone have swelled by 500%, creating an entire industry around helping men feel younger and healthier. While most of us think of testosterone as the essence of what makes a man, the male sex hormone, it might actually be the unsung hero in men's health, including sleep health. If you're skimping on sleep, it's time to learn how sleep affects your testosterone levels - and what happens when those levels dip.

Testosterone, sleep & weight

Testosterone, in men and women, helps build strength, muscle mass and bone density, as well as revving up your sex drive. During the day testosterone levels naturally drop and they're replenished at night while we sleep.

"Testosterone is manufactured in short bursts at night," says Dr. La Puma. Research shows levels peak during REM sleep, our deepest restorative sleep. When we don't **get enough sleep**, by choice or because of a **sleep disorder**, our ability to manufacture testosterone is affected. Recent studies suggest that skimping on sleep - even for just one week - can significantly reduce testosterone levels. "For men, sleeping less than 6 hours a night reduces testosterone levels by 10-15%."

Lower testosterone levels can affect much more than just your libido though. Reduced energy, poor concentration, fatigue and diminished strength - not to mention weight gain. If you're not sleeping well and your weight increases, you'll have more of an enzyme (found in body fat) that converts testosterone into estrogen (the female sex hormone), which slows production of testosterone even further.

The heavier you are, the more estrogen you produce. Talk about a depressing, emasculating circle.

What if you could increase testosterone levels by simply eating healthier and getting a good night's sleep? Dr. La Puma says men need **7-9 hours of sleep** - regularly - but most of us are so accustomed to sleep deprivation that we no longer understand our body's natural "tired" cues.

"People mistake tiredness for hunger and reach for a snack when they should be taking a nap instead," says Dr. La Puma. "Even though it seems to make no sense, people snack instead of sleep - something they can easily satisfy. But when you eat more, you weigh more."



Starting your day off on the right nutritional foot will prevent runaway eating at night. “Many eat a light breakfast and lunch and then eat from dinnertime to bed, snacking on foods higher in fats and sugars,” he says. “Start your morning with a balanced mix of carbs, protein and fat. You should have some protein at every meal so you’re full and satisfied after eating.”

Before opting for testosterone replacement medication, Dr. La Puma says to try everything else first. “Cut out coffee, start exercising, standardize your sleep times, reserve the bedroom for sleep and sex only and keep your room cool, dark and quiet.”

Not sure if your testosterone levels are low? The New England Research Institutes (NERI) says a man’s waist size is the strongest predictor of low testosterone levels.



Wake up happy without a prescription...

While drugs treat everything from insomnia to restless leg syndrome, reaching for a pill isn't always the best answer. A healthy life is built on a balanced foundation of diet, exercise and sleep – and all three are equally important.

If you want to stay on the drug-free side of healthy sleep, maybe it's time to hack your sleep – for the good of your health.

Your morning wakeup call

- **Lose the snooze button** – Repeatedly hitting the snooze button can seriously impair morning mental function by interrupting your natural sleep and wake-up cycle.
- **Soak up the sunshine** – Early morning light wakes up your internal rooster and sets you up for an active, productive start to the day. Can't get outside? Turn on your phone – the backlight will do (mostly) the same job.
- **Hydrate and break your nightly fast** – Your body has survived without water or food all night – wake up your metabolism with a big glass of water (before your first coffee) and a protein-rich breakfast. You'll be amazed at your ability to resist cravings later in the day.
- **Get some exercise** – Now that you've filled up your sleep gas tank, time to use some of that fuel to move your body. Park further away from the office, use the stairs instead of the elevator or slip out for a nooner walk.



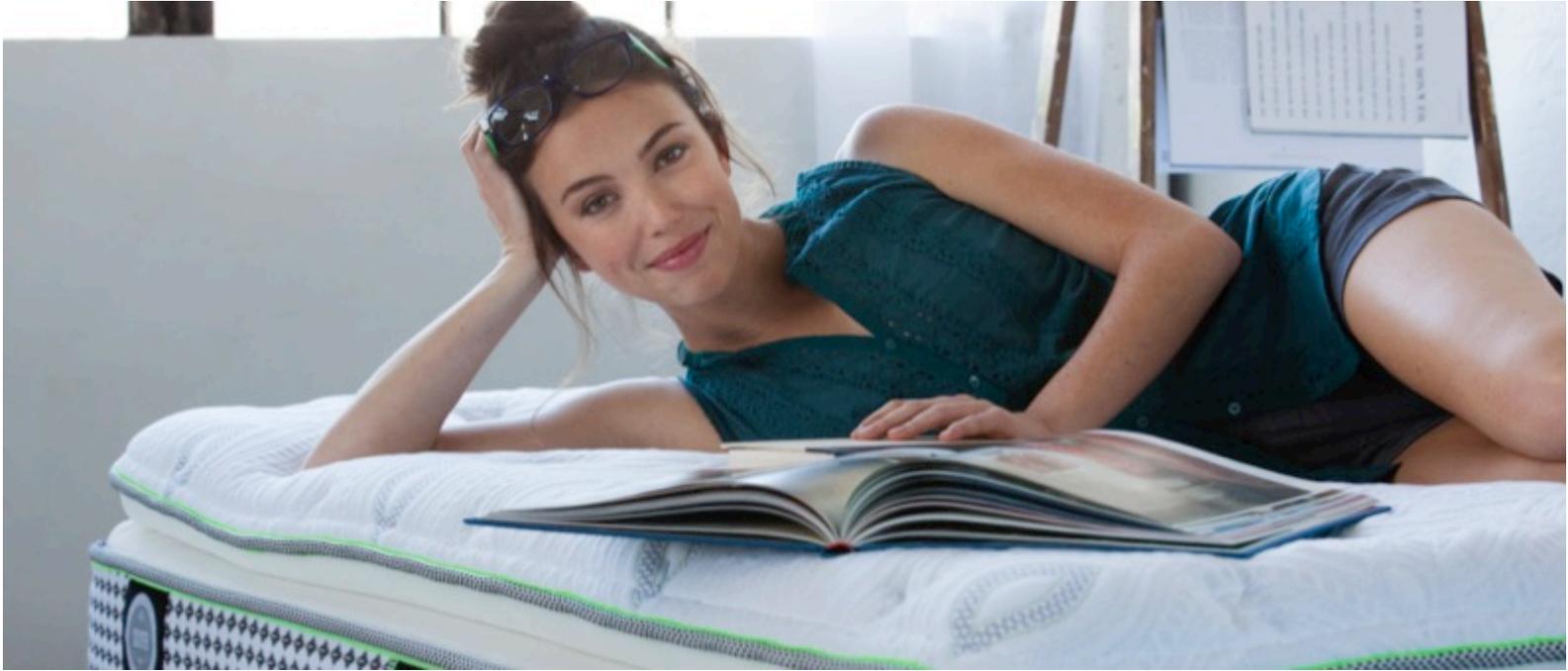
Afternoon energizers

- **Nap to pay back your sleep debt** – If you can't fit a solid 8 sleep hours into your night, sneak in naps to help make up the deficit. People who nap for a half hour 3 times per week reduce their chance of heart attack by 37%.
- **Coffee + nap = the ultimate sleep hack** – Drink a cool cup of coffee and then grab a 20-minute siesta. You'll wake up just as the caffeine hits your system and be ready to take on the rest of your day.
- **Ditch the energy drinks** – They steal your sleep and your sanity and can contribute to significant weight gain.

Sweet dreams sleep tips

- **Use an alarm clock for bedtime** – Set an alarm on your phone to remind you when it's time to start powering down electronics and get ready for sleep. Take 20 minutes to finish your chores, 20 minutes for personal hygiene and 20 minutes to read quietly or relax before lights out for the night. If you must leave your phone on overnight, place it facedown on your bedside table and screen incoming calls to only top priority numbers.
- **Go to bed early to stop snoring AND to lose weight** – Sleep triggers a hormone that regulates your appetite – skimp on sleep you're more likely to choose high-fat, salty rather than healthy snacks. And the heavier you are, the more likely you are to snore, which can keep you – and your partner – from a good night's sleep.
- **Sniff your way to sleep** – Aromatherapy (ylang ylang, lavender and chamomile) have been shown to help you relax and fall asleep faster.
- **Optimize your bedroom for sleep** – Think of your bed and pillows as performance gear. Do a sensory test of your bedroom furnishings – sight, touch, smell, sound all contribute to your good (or not so good) night's sleep.
- **Use a nightlight** – Bright lights wake up your brain so light your path to the bathroom with ambient lighting or a small nightlight.





Supporting dreams of a happier you

What makes you happy? Do you believe being happy is important to your health and well-being? In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly recognized happiness as a fundamental human goal and in 2013 held the first ever conference devoted to happiness worldwide. On March 20, 2013, 140 countries around the world recognized the first ever International Day of Happiness.

*“The pursuit of happiness lies at the core of human endeavors.”
~ UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon*

Happiness facts

We think happiness is the fourth pillar in a healthy life – diet, exercise, sleep AND happiness. Study after study shows that happy people enjoy life more and live longer. In fact, the Harvard School of Public Health studied more than 2,000 individual research studies and found that optimism and positive emotions provided protection against cardiovascular disease and slowed the progression of heart disease. Over and over and over again.

Worry you’re not a naturally happy person? Research shows happiness is a skill we can learn and enhance through training, thanks to the neuroplasticity of our brains.

How to be happy

The ten keys to a more joyful life can be condensed into one sweet acronym: GREAT DREAM. And since we’re the supporting dreams company, we couldn’t risk putting our own little spin to achieving happiness.



Giving: Giving to others releases endorphins, which boosts happiness. Studies show that giving things away makes us happy. Your time, love, ideas and energy are all great things to trade for this sweet endorphin boost.

- RESTONIC TIP: Give yourself something – the gift of a good night’s sleep. A well-rested you is a healthier you.

Relating: Being involved in social networks (online and face to face) protects us from heart disease, lowers our risk of heart attack and reduces mental decline as we age. The happy twist here is that not only do relationships make us happy, but happy people tend to have more relationships. Nice, right?

- RESTONIC TIP: Share your happiness with us on Facebook or Twitter. We LOVE to chat.

Exercise: Our minds and bodies are connected and many studies show that consistent exercise improves our mood (even lifting us out of depression) and protects us from a smorgasbord of diseases.

- RESTONIC TIP: Unplug from your computer and get outside. Fresh air and exercise will help you sleep better.

Appreciating: Bad things happen to everyone but seeing life through the lens of gratitude reduces the impact stressful situations have on our bodies.

- RESTONIC TIP: If you didn’t sleep well last night, don’t worry, you can try again tonight.

Trying out: Be a life-long learner. We live in a big, beautiful world and new experiences sharpen our minds and reduce stress. Learn to see different experiences as exciting rather than scary and you’ll stay curious and engaged your whole life.

- RESTONIC TIP: If you’re struggling to get a good night’s sleep, it might be time to get help from a sleep doctor. You can learn to sleep better.



Direction: Feeling confident and assured that you're making mindful contributions to this world reduces risk of depression. Ambitious but realistic goals that set us up for success prepare us for the next challenge.

- RESTONIC TIP: Being ready to take on challenges begins with a good night's sleep and we can help you find yours.

Resilience: We've all had days, weeks and years that seem to deliver an endless stream of stressful, negative experiences. But when we employ some of the above tactics, such as gratitude, we become resilient – bullet proof against negativity.

- RESTONIC TIP: If you're spending your nights staring stress down, learn some coping techniques. Your health will thank you.

Emotion: Openly expressing emotion is good for our physical and emotional heart health, like an upward spiral filled with joy.

- RESTONIC TIP: Cheers to laughing out loud more often.

Acceptance: St Francis of Assisi had it right when he prayed to accept that which he couldn't change. Peace of mind might be the best way to a healthy life AND a good night's sleep.

- RESTONIC TIP: Learn how much sleep you need to stay healthy – it's different for everyone.

Meaning: We crave for meaningful relationships and work and religious experiences. When we feel we have meaning, we feel connected, happier and healthier. This one is different for each of us but we know in our hearts when we're on the right track.

- RESTONIC TIP: Don't look too far for meaning. Sometimes it can be found in your bed – doing something other than sleeping.



Eat, sleep, travel

Summer and travel – our two favorite words. Trouble is, travel’s uninvited companion, sleep deprivation, usually hitches a ride and brings everyone down. But a few simple tips could send your sleep challenges packing, leaving you energized and ready for adventure.

Reserve rest & relaxation

If a quiet night is a priority for you when you travel, speak up when booking your room. You’re the expert on what helps you relax and get the sleep you need. If you’re going to Vegas, skip to the next section – you won’t be sleeping anyway...

- **Ask for a quiet room** – Request a room away from the elevator, stairs and ice machine.
- **Don’t follow the sun** – If you’re crossing time zones, request a room on the west side of the hotel to avoid a sunrise wake-up call.
- **Update your profile online** – Some chains allow priority customers to enter personal information that will help the hotel serve you better when you arrive.

First class luxury

When it comes to sleep and travel, space is a luxury – and a necessity. While the price of first class may be hard to swallow, there’s a lot to be said for finding a place to stretch out.

- **Secure your stuff** – Feeling safe is priority number one for sleep. If there’s a place to lock your belongings, use it. If not, make sure your money, credit cards and passport are tucked inside your shirt where it would be hard for someone to remove without waking you.
- **Stretch it out** – If your flight’s delayed, chances are you aren’t relaxed. Yoga or some simple stretches that elongate your muscles will help release the tension. If it helps, put on your headphones and let your favorite tunes relax you.
- **Change your clothes** – Slip into loose clothing that will allow you to move freely (and make it easier to nap).
- **Make a pillow** – Your head needs a soft place to rest so roll up a jacket or scarf. It’s as simple as that.



Last longer in bed

Travel quickly across time zones and jet lag becomes an unwelcome and unavoidable travel partner. And if you're going west to east, expect jet lag to be worse. But there are non-medicinal ways to reduce sleep disruption.

Start by pushing back your bedtime about 6 days before you leave – just 15 minutes will do it. Then 3 days out, push it back ½ hour.

When you board the plane, adjust your watch, laptop and cellphone and start living the new time zone right away.

While in the air

- **Try not to nap** – A nap can thwart your body's need for a longer sleep that night. If you must sleep, limit yourself to 25 minutes,
- **Stay hydrated with water** – Not coffee, alcoholic beverages or soda drinks. Arriving dehydrated will make you feel lousy and it will also makes it hard for your body to adjust to the new rhythm.
- **If you must nap when you arrive** – Limit your nap to 90 minutes, long enough to recharge the batteries but not so long you won't be able to sleep later.

When you arrive

- **Pack a sleep kit** – Eye shades, meditation CD, aromatherapy sprays (lavender or chamomile) and a night light so you don't wake yourself up fully if you need to use the bathroom in the middle of the night.
- **Try a bedtime shower or bath** – Studies show that raising the body temperature (with hot water) and lowering it quickly (with room temperature air) an hour before bed relaxes your muscles and prepares your body for sleep.
- **Clip the drapes shut** – Furnace and air vents are often directly below the curtains. Clipping them prevents them from separating during the night and letting the early morning sun in.
- **Check the thermostat** – Sleep can be disrupted if the room is warmer than 65° F or colder than 54° F.
- **Check the clock** – The alarm may still be set from the last guest.

When you travel, how do you protect your sleep?

The ultimate sleep diet

What if you could sleep better just by tweaking your diet?

Researchers say that how much you sleep and the quality of your sleep silently controls a team of hormones, which control appetite and the ability to handle stress.

If you're ready for you're a [sleep epiphany](#), we've got a list of foods that will help your body and mind unwind so you can get the sleep you need.

Cherries – Cherries boost melatonin naturally. If you're not familiar with melatonin, it's a naturally occurring hormone that helps regulate your sleep cycle. Sip a glass of cherry juice or scoop some into bowl to munch on before bed.

Dark chocolate – The cacao bean is a chalky, nasty-tasting disease-fighting bullet. The serotonin in it makes it an over-achieving [sleep superstar](#). While milk, sugar and butter make it taste better, they also add a heap of calories and reduce effectiveness. Stick to chocolate that's at least 70% cacao and you'll reap the rewards without the extra calories

Almonds – Studies show magnesium promotes deeper sleep and almonds provide a yummy way to get in that action. A handful before bed is all you'll need.

Chamomile tea – A warm drink before bed is comforting and soothing but coffee, most tea and hot chocolate all contain [caffeine](#). Chamomile lacks the caffeine and studies show it increases glycine, a chemical that relaxes nerves and muscles. Now all you need is your favorite book and you'll be ready for sleep in no time.

Bananas – If your mom fed you bananas before bed, she was onto something good. They contain the sleep-inducing amino acid tryptophan, which encourages relaxation.

Oily fish – Tuna and salmon give you a boost of vitamin B6, which helps your body manufacture melatonin. Roasted salmon or a tuna steak for dinner paves the path for sweet dreams later.

Kale – There's a reason kale's lauded as a super-food. It's loaded with calcium, which helps the brain process tryptophan to manufacture melatonin and serotonin – and its low in calories.

Oily fish and kale for dinner, almonds and tea for a bedtime snack and you're set for a healthier, well-rested YOU!

Sleep Recipes from ChefMD.com

Salsa, black bean & avocado omelette

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 8 minutes

Servings: 2



Use a flat round pan with a slight edge. Make sure to coat the pan lightly with olive oil after heating it to prevent sticking. Once the center of the omelet has cooked (approx.. 3 min), use a heat-resistant spatula to loosen it all around the edge and carefully fold over. Voila!

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup jalapeno cilantro salsa, such as Frontera brand, divided
- 2 large omega 3 eggs
- 2 large omega 3 egg whites
- ½ cup rinsed and drained canned black beans
- ½ ripe avocado, peeled, seeded, diced
- ¼ cup crumbled queso fresco cheese
- ¼ cup sliced green onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped epazote

Preparation

Heat oil in a 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add 1/3 cup of the salsa to the oil; simmer 1 minute or until thickened. Beat eggs and egg whites until well blended; stir into salsa mixture. Cook 1 to 2 minutes or until eggs begin to set. Gently lift edges of omelet with a large spatula to allow uncooked portion of eggs to flow to edges and set. Continue cooking 1 to 2 minutes or until center is almost set (top of eggs will be wet).

Combine beans, avocado, cheese and green onion; spread down center of omelet. Use spatula to fold omelette in half over filling; cook 1 to 2 minutes or until filling is hot and eggs are set in center. Cut in half; transfer to two serving plates and garnish with epazote and remaining 1/3 cup salsa.



Substitutions

Farmer's cheese or queso anejo cheese may replace the queso fresco cheese and flat leaf parsley or cilantro may replace the epazote.

Culinary Taste Tip

Fresh eggs always taste best. Older eggs slosh around in their shells. So give one a gentle shake against your ear and choose the carton with eggs that don't slosh.

Nutritional Analysis

Total fat (g): 15.18. Fat calories (kc): 135.65. Cholesterol (mg): 224.97. Trans fatty acids (g): 0. Saturated fat (g): 4.29. Polyunsaturated fat (g): 1.2. Monounsaturated fat (g): 6.11. Fiber (g): 6.28. Carbohydrates (g): 19.53. Sugars (g): 2.32. Protein (g): 17.85. Sodium (mg): 350.21. Calcium (mg) 128.66.

Pear, sage & walnut pizza with bleu cheese

Servings: 10 (Pizza Makes 10 Slices)

Ingredients

- 6 fresh sage leaves, slivered
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 large yellow onions, diced medium
- 1 cup walnut pieces, toasted and cooled
- 4 large pears, bosc or d'anjou preferred
- 4 tablespoons very good quality balsamic vinegar
- Two 12 inch pizza shells, frozen or room temperature, Boboli thin crust preferred (check for trans-fat absence)
- 4 ounces very good quality bleu cheese
- One-half teaspoon fresh ground nutmeg



Preparation

Immerse the sage leaves in the olive oil. To a very hot saucepan add the olive oil, reserving the sage, and then the onions: cook until golden, about 10 minutes. Toast the walnuts in a 350 degree oven for 12 minutes. Remove when they start to darken, and let cool. Stem the fruit and slice lengthwise, very thin--about one-quarter inch thick. Paint each shell with balsamic vinegar. Layer with the onions and then fruit. Crumble cheese and walnuts on top of each shell, and sprinkle with nutmeg. Bake in a 425 degree oven for 10 minutes, remove and garnish with sage. Allow to cool on a perforated pan for five minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.



Culinary Taste Tip

Toasting walnuts brings out extra flavor. Be sure to remove walnuts from heat when they begin to darken

Nutritional Analysis

Calories, 302; Calories from fat, 132; Total fat, 14.7 g; Saturated fat, 3.8 g; Cholesterol, 8 mg; Sodium , 378 mg; Total carbohydrates, 34.6 g; Dietary fiber, 3.7 g; Protein, 7.9 g.

Tosted oatmeal with mango & walnuts

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Servings: 4



Toasting rolled oats is one way to boost flavor without adding calories or unhealthy fats. Over-stirring the oatmeal changes the texture from smooth to too smooth and a little pasty. Just let the simmering milk do its job.

Ingredients

- 3 cups old-fashioned oats, uncooked
- One-half cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 4 cups skim milk or fat-free soy milk
- One-half cup diced dried mango
- One-quarter teaspoon salt
- One-eighth teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 large ripe fresh mango, diced (2 cups)

Preparation

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Spread oats in a single layer on a jelly-roll pan. Place nuts on a small baking sheet. Bake oats and nuts 6 to 7 minutes or until lightly toasted. Set nuts and oats aside separately. Combine milk, dried mango, salt, and nutmeg in a medium saucepan; bring just to a simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to low; add toasted oats. Simmer 5 to 8 minutes or until thickened, stirring only once or twice. Transfer to four serving bowls; top with fresh mango and toasted nuts. Serve with additional milk, if desired.



Substitutions

Dried strawberries or golden raisins may replace dried mango; 2 cups sliced strawberries may replace fresh mango. Brazil nuts may replace walnuts. One-half teaspoon cinnamon may replace nutmeg. For a lighter, less aggressive flavor, use true cinnamon, sometimes called Ceylonese cinnamon, if you can find it.

Culinary Taste Tip

To quickly dice a mango, place the fruit firmly on a cutting board, point side down. Then cut away from you, and slice down until you reach the pit. Then, make quick cross hatches, and scoop out perfect cubes of mango!

Nutritional Analysis

Total fat (g) 17.5; Fat calories (kc) 158; Cholesterol (mg) 0; Saturated fat (g) 1.8; Polyunsaturated fat (g) 9.3; Monounsaturated fat (g) 4.1; Fiber (g) 9.3; Carbohydrates (g) 64.6; Sugar (g) 16.2; Protein (g) 20.7; Sodium (mg) 33; Calcium (mg) 61; Magnesium (mg) 176; Zinc (mg) 3.0; Selenium (mcg) 36; Potassium (mg) 793; Vitamin A (RE) 428; Beta-carotene (RE) 447; Vitamin C (mg) 29; Vitamin E (mg) 2.2; Thiamin B1 (mg) 0.9; Riboflavin B2 (mg) 0.3; Niacin B3 (mg) 1.5; Vitamin B6 (mg) 0.40; Folic acid (mcg) 48

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