

Maintain Don't Gain: Sleep



Most healthy adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night to function at peak capacity. Sleep also plays an important role in maintaining a healthy weight. Lack of sleep increases the hormone that signals we are hungry, decreases the hormone that signals that we are full and makes us less inclined to exercise. In a study funded by the National Institutes of Health, participants who reduced the number of normal hours of sleep by just one-third consumed more than 500 extra calories the next day (Mayo Clinic Research).

Tips for improving sleep quality (check those that you might try)

Create an Optimal Sleep Environment

- Keep your bedroom cool-optimal temperature for sleep is 60-67 degrees.
- Remove all electronics from your bedroom. TVs, computers, cell phones and electronic readers emit a light that interferes with the production of the sleep hormone (melatonin).
- Eliminate noise and light-invest in blackout shades or curtains, try an eye mask or earplugs and consider white noise (sound machine or app).

Develop a Pre-sleep Routine

- Make a prioritized “TO DO” list before going to bed. This will help avoid that loop of continuous thinking about what you need to do tomorrow.
- Turn off all electronics at least an hour before going to bed. Leave your cell phone outside of the bedroom to avoid checking texts and emails while in bed.
- Limit alcohol. While alcohol might help you fall asleep it disrupts sleep later in the night.
- Avoid large meals within 2-3 hours of going to bed. At parties, try to eat smaller portions before you arrive and throughout the evening.
- Relax before trying to fall asleep—a warm bath, a cup of tea, gentle stretching, reading or listening to music all enhance our ability to fall asleep.

Good Sleep Begins During the Day

- Exercise! As little as 10 minutes of exercise on a daily basis can help you fall asleep faster, sleep longer and improve the quality of your sleep.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks 6-8 hours prior to going to bed.
- Get plenty of natural sunlight. Consider a light therapy box if natural sunlight is not an option.
- Naps are a great way to re-energize during the day. Limit naps to 30 minutes to avoid disturbing your sleep/wake cycle.
- Focus on the positive—often the most memorable events are those that don't turn out exactly as planned. Sleep easy and enjoy the holidays!

Reference: Sleep Foundation.org



Workforce Health

08082016