

Z
Z
Z

SLEEP

SURVIVAL

GUIDE



HOW WELL DO YOU SLEEP?

If you have more poor nights' sleep than good ones, you are

According to the 2017 Great British Bedtime Report, two thirds of Britons now sleep significantly less than the seven-to-eight hours conventional wisdom and science tells us we need.

And most fall into the five-to-six hours a night bracket – what's more, many rate the quality of their sleep as 'poor'.

There is good news if you're a man, as it appears men on average enjoying a better quality of sleep than women, with nearly a third of men claiming they sleep well most nights.

What's really interesting is that we also appear to be sleeping less than we did just three years ago.

SO WHAT'S GOING ON, AND WHAT'S TO BLAME FOR SLEEP LOSS?



01

STRESS



Stress is one of the biggest culprits when it comes to sleep loss, with almost half of Britons saying stress or worry keeps them awake at night (47%).

It is hardly surprising that people who experience high levels of worry, anxiety or stress, find falling to sleep challenging, as sleep requires a quiet and relaxed mind.

The stress hormone cortisol does not help as it negatively impacts melatonin levels (the hormone that helps us sleep) and tends to peak just when we are winding down in the late afternoon / early evening.

What's worse, it is not just a one-way relationship, with increased stress leading to less sleep. A lack of sleep also leads to increased levels of stress!

The brain chemicals that stop the production of the stress hormone cortisol are the same ones that are linked to deep sleep. Meaning, if you do not reach a deep sleep during the night your body will continue to pump out stress hormones, leaving you feeling more stressed in the morning.





02

SENSORY OVERLOAD

We live in an era of sensory overload, which started with the invention of the electric lightbulb which completely altered our pattern of light exposure (especially at night). This directly and indirectly affected sleep patterns, with too much light directly making it hard to sleep and indirectly changing our circadian rhythm (the body's own internal clock) altering our preferred time to sleep.

It is not only the light bulb that has changed our light consumption, blue light from electronic screens is having a marked effect on people's sleep patterns.

Noise pollution is worse, especially in urban areas, than it ever has been. The impact of this is that people are prevented from reaching the 'deep sleep' phase which is so important for our body's nightly regeneration.

Then there is night-time temperature. Centrally heated homes are only a relatively recent thing, for millenniums our bodies have got used to a nightly

drop in both external and core temperatures - this signifies it's time to sleep. Modern living means this often does not happen, what's more, while there is a huge range of the ideal nightly room temperature, most of us choose a too warm setting, and as a result are constantly waking up during the night. REM sleep is particularly temperature sensitive.



03

MINDSET

There is becoming more and more of a 'sleep-deprived' culture, where going to bed late, embracing insomnia and living on low levels of sleep is not only acceptable, it's almost a badge of honour.

While different people do need different levels of sleep, very few need less than a steady six hours sleep a night, and most will benefit from nearer eight.

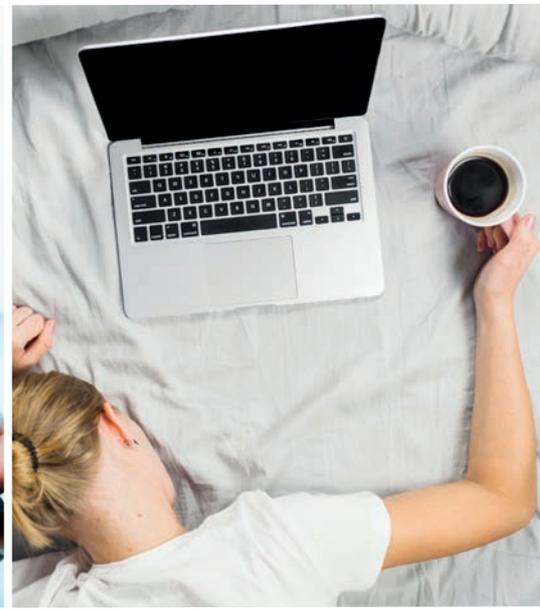
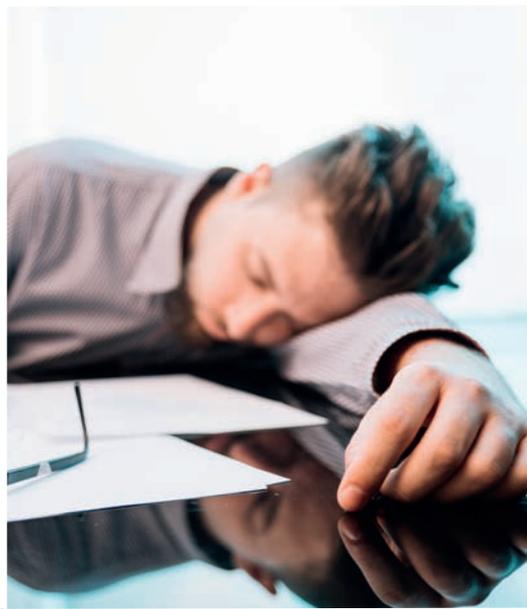
Poor sleeping habits will, and do, affect every area of your life – from your physical and mental health, to your work performance and sex life. If you feel that you are getting less sleep than necessary or that your quality of sleep is being affected – it is time to do something about it NOW!



VERY FEW PEOPLE NEED LESS THAN A STEADY SIX HOURS SLEEP A NIGHT, AND MOST WILL BENEFIT FROM NEARER EIGHT



PART
ONE



z
z
z

IMPACT OF SLEEP



01

PHYSICAL HEALTH

WEIGHT GAIN

Believe it or not, sleep loss makes you fat!

When you sleep less, your gut produces more 'ghrelin' (the hunger hormone). This, along with other factors, reduces both your leptin and energy levels and the result is you eat more – especially comfort foods.

Scientific studies conducted by the Mayo Clinic found that people getting five or less hours sleep were 73% more likely to become overweight. Another study by Berkeley showed that for every hour of sleep lost, 2.1 points were gained on the individual's BMI.

So sleep should be your number one port of call when looking to lose weight!

INFLAMMATION

People are suffering from more and more immune system related diseases. Could a lack of sleep be a factor?

Studies have shown that just one week of less sleep can cause the genes that control inflammation to increase their activity. So if you have an immune system related disease, maybe it is worth looking at your sleeping patterns.

SHRINKING BRAIN

It might sound like a myth, but over time people who don't get enough sleep can cause their brain to shrink.

One of the most dangerous effects of sleep loss is the shrinking of the brain. This occurs as a result of continuous sleep deprivation, killing brain cells.

So be kind to your brain and get more sleep!

TOXIN BUILD UP

Alzheimers and other brain related diseases are on the increase; one train of thought is that a reduced levels of sleep could have a role.

The glymphatic system (our brain's

drainage system), cleans out the toxins that build up during a day of mental activity. Some of these toxins have been clearly linked to diseases like Alzheimers. The glymphatic system works 60% more effectively while we sleep, so poor sleep is likely to lead to a toxic build up.

MICRO-SLEEPS

Sleep deprivation has been shown to push the body into a micro-sleep phase where the body takes short 'micro-sleeps' while performing mundane or day-to-day tasks. While the idea of nodding off during the office meeting is not too bad, there are times when micro-sleeps could be deadly. Research suggests that micro-sleeps are often the biggest culprits behind traffic accidents.

LOSS OF SEX DRIVE

Men and women who don't get enough quality sleep also have lower libidos (unsurprisingly) and less interested in sex. **So to get more, sleep more!**

02

MENTAL HEALTH

IRRITABILITY AND MOODINESS

A single sleepless night can make you irritable and moody the following day.

The reason for this is that after a night of less than six hours' sleep, the amygdala (the brain's emotional centre) becomes hyperactive, while the cortical centres (which do the executive thinking) are slower. As a result, we think less and react more.

This is the reason we often find ourselves to be more snappy, emotional and irrational after a poor night's sleep.

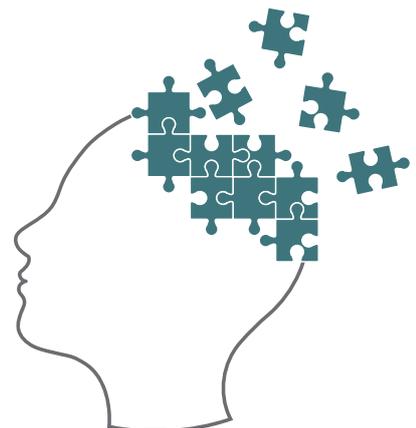
STRESS

Sleep and stress have a horrible inverse relationship: the more you're stressed the less you sleep, and the less you sleep the more you stress.

There are two reasons for this: firstly, lack of sleep causes a higher volume of cortisol (the stress hormone) to be produced by the body, and secondly, REM sleep (where you dream) helps you process emotional stress, so when you sleep less you lose this important function.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Studies have shown that chronic sleep debt may lead to long-term mood disorders like depression and anxiety. There is also a nasty negative feedback cycle that is associated with this, with most people suffering depression also sleeping less than six hours a night and rating their sleep quality as poor.





PART TWO



GETTING A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

z
z
z



01

CREATE A SANCTUARY



Make your bedroom a place to sleep and try not to use it for anything else.

- > **Banish all laptops, smart phones and TVs.** While this should be a no brainer, it seems people cannot get past their electronic addiction. The blue screens affect melatonin levels (our natural sleep hormone), **SO SWITCH THEM OFF.** Watch TV downstairs and make your bedroom a place to simply relax and switch off.
- > **Never eat or drink in bed.** Smell has an important sensory impact on sleep; just as the scent of fresh sheets been shown to promote good sleep, the smell of stale food can negatively impact it. So keep eating out of the bedroom!

- > **Changing your bedding weekly and your mattresses every eight years (or 20,000 sleep hours!) is an often overlooked aspect of a good sleep routine.** We spend around a third of our lives in bed, so investing in a good mattress is a great way to invest in yourself.

- > **Make sure your room temperature is not too hot.** As already mentioned, a nightly drop in temperature reduces our body's core temperature and acts as a sleep-time cue. If you artificially keep the temperature up, you will find sleep more challenging.

- > **Keep it dark!** Our circadian rhythm is strongly linked to the outside environment, so any light we let into our bedroom can disrupt our sleep completely or reduce our sleep quality. This is especially true for those living in countries nearer to the poles who experience longer and shorter days throughout the year. A simple hack is to invest in a blackout blind – they can be expensive, but they are worth it!



02

REGULAR BEDTIMES

& A SLEEP SCHEDULE

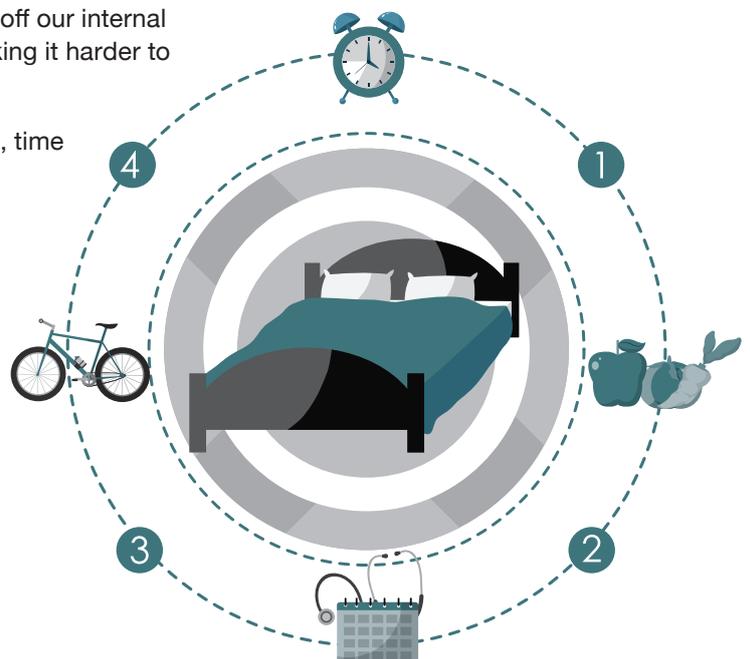
A lot of us use the weekends and vacation time to catch up on sleep but this can have harmful long-term effects.

At best, it is an ineffective habit that initially may make us feel better but the effects are only temporary – the reason being, our body's internal clock (or circadian rhythm) that dictates when we are sleepy or wide awake is

HACK: Set a sleep time alarm 15 minutes before your set bedtime; once this goes off dim the lights and start switching off.

based on the Earth's cycle of sunlight and darkness. By altering our sleeping patterns through the week, we are completely throwing off our internal clock, ultimately making it harder to fall asleep at night.

Research has shown, time and time again, that simply going to bed at the same time every day – even on weekends – and waking up at the same time too, will be strengthening your circadian rhythm and promoting good sleep.



03

PUT IN PLACE PRE-SLEEP RITUALS

Habits are hard – rituals are more fun and so are easier to form!

CREATE A PRE-SLEEP RITUAL THAT IS SLEEP CENTRED:

- > Start by only eating a light dinner before bed, around three hours before you want to sleep. This gives your digestive system time to work.
- > Do some light, fun activities after dinner instead of going back to work. Things like reading a book (not an e-book, as the blue screen effect can impact your melatonin), do a puzzle or some stretching. Evenings should be about letting yourself wind down; doing things like listening to relaxing music for 45 minutes prior to falling asleep

has been shown to help people fall asleep faster, wake up less during the night, and have more restful sleep.

- > Take a warm bath, or shower, an hour before bed and then dim the lights before bedtime to aid melatonin secretion.
- > Spend 15 minutes writing down any worries – along with potential solutions – as well as making a list of what you need to do the next day.
- > Finally, make sure all digital devices are turned off 30 minutes before bedtime.



MAKE SURE ALL DIGITAL DEVICES ARE TURNED OFF 30 MINUTES BEFORE BEDTIME



04

BANISH THE STIMULATIVE

EFFECTIVE

**TEA, COFFEE, CHOCOLATE,
NICOTINE, SODA**

Whatever your weakness, make sure you stay strong for the four hours before bedtime. In fact, many advise that you should avoid all stimulants past midday (although this could be a step too far for many).

**TRY TO AVOID ALL STIMULANTS
AFTER MIDDAY TO MAKE SURE YOU
GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**



HACK: Replace your late night coffee with a healthier alternative – try a Rooibos cappuccino or herbal tea instead.



05

LEARN MORE ABOUT

SLEEP CYCLES



For the last century we have known that humans have 90-minute sleep cycles and that these cycles have five stages:

- 1 Sleepiness
- 2 Light sleep
- 3 Deep Sleep (Phase one)
- 4 Deep Sleep (Phase two)
- 5 REM/Dreaming

If you can schedule that your alarm goes off between two of these stages, rather than in the middle of one, you will feel a lot better and a lot less groggy in the morning.



90 minutes



06

TURN ON THE WHITE NOISE



Noise is one of the key contributors to a restless night's sleep, with even the smallest sound jarring you for a peaceful night's sleep.

There are two ways you can go about this: noise cancelling headphones are one (although they do make some people feel rather claustrophobic), another is to get used to white noise that drowns out artificial sounds and can be incredibly peaceful too. Try natural noises, like rainfall and thunder.





07

DAILY EXERCISE

It is well known that exercise enhances the quality of your sleep; all science suggests you need is 2.5 hours a week of moderate exercise to vastly improve the way you sleep. Just make sure you don't work out too late into the evening as your body needs to cool down before you to bed.

There have been a number of studies that have shown those who exercise before eating gain almost no weight but burn more fat through the day than those who do not.



HACK: Early morning 12-minuter – set your alarm 15 minutes earlier, get up and go outside then do a brisk 12-minute walk. It can turn into a jog, but a brisk walk is all you need.



These should not just be for babies, as a siesta, snooze or power nap enables us to recharge our bodies and brains. This has been shown to increase creativity, intuition, imagination and the ability to problem solve. NASA pilots who took 26-minute naps made 34 percent fewer errors at work and doubled their alertness levels.

For those looking for something more, how about a coffee-powered nap? Sounds counter intuitive, but drinking a coffee right before taking a 20-minute power nap will not affect the nap itself, but will give you the caffeine buzz as you wake up!

Remember though, a nap does not substitute good sleep!

HACK: Scheduling in a power-nap is not as challenging as it seems. You could take one in your car over lunchtime, on the commute home if you use public transport, or as soon as you get home. Give it a try: just 20 minutes a day can really change how you feel and perform.

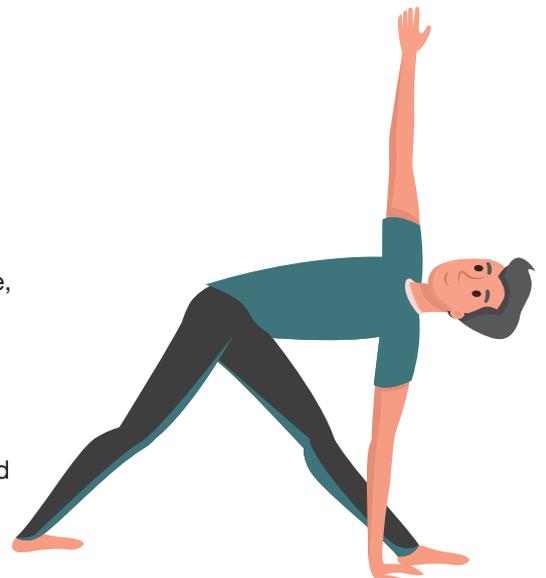


09

CRACK DOWN ON CORTISOL

The stress hormone cortisol gives us energy during the day and is highest in the morning, which is why we are at our most productive then. It gradually decreases during the day and is inversely related to melatonin (the more cortisol we have in our systems the less melatonin). Having a stressful day triggers too much cortisol production, so make sure you keep yours in check by:

- > Engaging in moderate exercise (just not too close to bedtime).
- > Becoming more aware of your thoughts, minimising negative and stressful thinking.
- > Using relaxation techniques like yoga and massage.
- > Doing more things that make you happy.
- > Maintaining healthy relationships, spending time with those you love, and eliminating the toxic people from your life.
- > Taking a healthy approach to nutrition and incorporating foods like bananas, pears, green tea and probiotics into your diet which decrease cortisol levels.



CHECK OUT THESE TRANSFORMATIONS

From people like you who train at East Coast Fitness





FINALLY:

HOPE THIS ALL HELPS
AND YOU CAN LOOK
FORWARD TO A **GOOD
NIGHT, WEEK AND
LIFETIME OF SLEEP!**

Please get in touch for more great
SLEEP SURVIVAL advice.

07875 548880

eastcoastfitnessseaham

www.eastcoast-fitness.com

