



A Wake-up Call

Why sleep is so important!

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Wake up!

Healthy sleep habits are critically important for general health, stress management and optimum body composition. The importance of healthy sleep habits cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, our society has become accustomed to making sacrifices in the area of sleep. Some may even consider it a badge of honor... "I run on 4hrs sleep, I don't need near as much sleep as I used to"... Actually, we do need as much sleep as we used to. We may not need as much as a teenager who is growing and changing at extreme rates with all the associated cell division and repair, but sleep is still and always will be of significant importance to our health and well being. It is when recovery, repair and stress reduction happen.

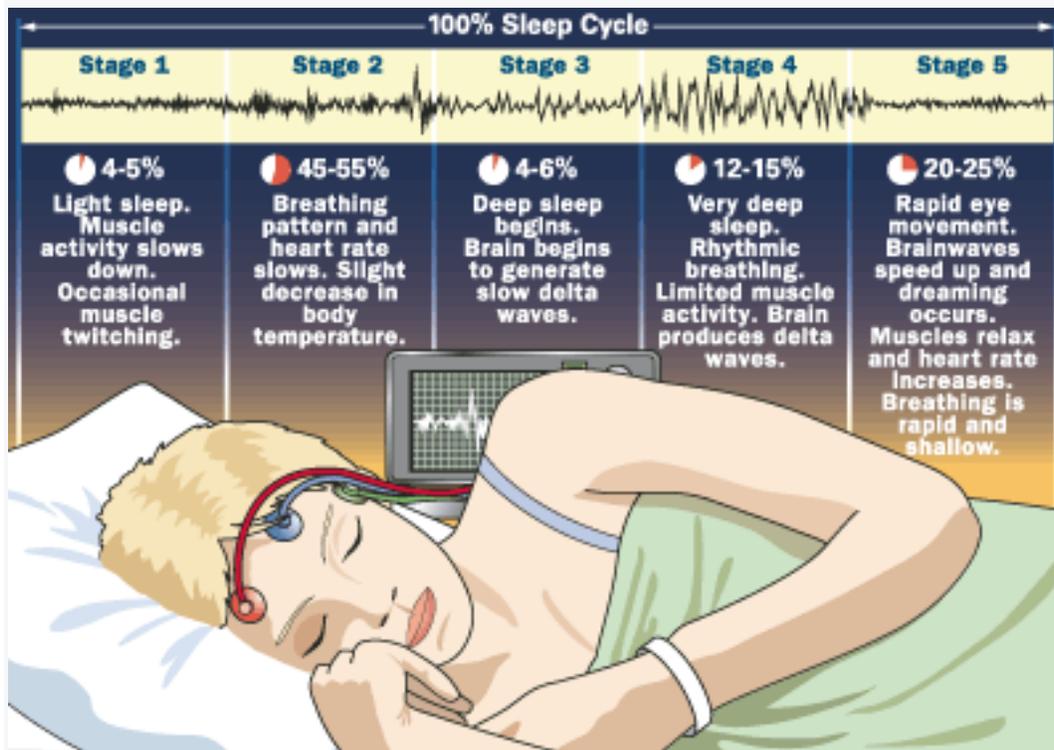


**KEEP CALM
AND
SLEEP**
ZZZZZZZZZZ...

Today, so many of us have moved into patterns of staying up late, snacking on high carbohydrate food and being continually bombarded with digital stimulation either from handheld devices, laptops, computers or television. We can all benefit from optimal sleep habits. Minimal artificial light, digital stimulation, a quiet, cool, dark sleeping environment coupled with waking naturally, leaves your feeling alert and energetic. Adequate sleep also contributes tremendously to body composition goals and overall health. Sleep is one of the most important ways of coping with life stresses in all forms, including, emotional health and well being.

Sleep Cycles

In the article from Psychology Today, "Your Sleep Cycle Revealed", Amie M. Gordon Ph.D. explains.



The 90 minute sleep cycle revealed
Source:

...The sleep cycle: A sleep cycle lasts about 90 minutes and during that time we move through five stages of sleep. The first four stages make up our non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep, and the fifth stage is when rapid eye movement (REM) sleep occurs.

NREM sleep: Across these four stages we move from very light sleep during Stage 1 down to very deep sleep in Stage 4. It is very difficult to wake someone who is in Stage 4 sleep. Across NREM sleep, we have little muscle activity and our eyes do not typically move, but all of our muscles retain their ability to function.

REM sleep: As the name would imply – during this final stage of sleep, we have bursts of rapid eye movements. This is the stage of sleep in which most dreaming occurs. Our eyes are not constantly moving, but they do dart back and forth, up and down. These eye movements may be related to visual images of dreams, but that is not confirmed, and in general, the reason for these eye movements is still a mystery. Although our

eyes are moving rapidly, the muscles that move our bodies are paralyzed (other important muscles, such as our heart and diaphragm continue to function normally)

It turns out it is not as simple as putting together 4 to 6 of the 90 minute sleep cycles I described above. Over the course of the night, the amount of time we spend in a particular stage of sleep begins to shift. During the first 2-3 sleep cycles, we spend most of our time in deep NREM sleep (stages 3-4), whereas during the final 2-3 sleep cycles, we spend much more time in REM sleep accompanied by lighter NREM sleep. And the complexity of sleep doesn't end there – apparently how much NREM and REM sleep we get is not just based on where we are in our nightly sleep, but it also depends on what time of day (or night) it is. Regardless of when you fall asleep, people tend to experience more NREM sleep in the earlier hours of the night (e.g., 11p – 3a) and more REM sleep in the later hours of the night (e.g., 3a – 7 a). So those after-hours mutants are getting more REM sleep overall than are the early-to-bedders. As with many other aspects of sleep, the need for all this complexity in our sleep cycles is still a mystery ...

Optimally cycling through all phases of sleep and staying in close alignment with the natural circadian rhythm helps regulate numerous hormones that affect appetite, satiety, and metabolism, such as leptin (satiety), ghrelin (hunger), CCK (stimulates the digestion of fat), insulin (regulates blood sugar), and cortisol (main stress hormone). In contrast, poor sleep habits or insufficient sleep can disturb the function of hormones and neurotransmitters in a way that promotes a pattern of excess over eating and fat storage. If you are sleep deficient, this can be a huge detriment to your goals to the extent that your diligent efforts to eat and exercise in a primal, paleo or keto way, are largely negated due to a pattern of insufficient sleep. If you are stuck in a failure pattern pertaining to weight loss or fitness gains, poor sleep habits could arguably be blamed at fifty percent for your failure!

Sleep Seasons

As detailed in the book, *Lights Out, Sleep, Sugar, and Survival*, by T.S. Wiley and Bent Formby, exposure to excessive artificial light after the sun sets tricks the body into thinking it's summertime, year round. A body composition problem results, because the human evolutionary pattern in summertime is to consume abundant amounts of carbohydrate (i.e., fresh seasonal fruit), produce higher levels of insulin than normal,

and store extra body fat in preparation for the winter season, which often involved periods of famine and less activity.

The human circadian rhythm is accustomed to sleeping less during the longer, brighter, warmer, more active days of summer than during the shorter, colder, darker days of winter. Sleep, Sugar, and Survival recommends fluctuating sleep habits to the tune of getting around 8 hours in the summer months and 9.5 hours per night in the winter months. This recommendation promotes closer circadian rhythm alignment with the rising and setting of the sun at different times of the year. The farther you are from the equator, the more you might fluctuate your sleeping hours between summer and winter. Where I live in Edmonton (53 degrees latitude) the hours of daylight fluctuate significantly from summer to winter. Winter Solstice, this day is 9 hours, 35 minutes **shorter** than on Summer Solstice. We can't fluctuate our sleep time that significantly from season to season. However any attempt to adjust with the season can show significant stress and rest benefits leading to overall health improvement.

Mark Sisson (Primal Blueprint) on artificial light and it's effect on melatonin... Exposing yourself to artificial light after it gets dark suppresses melatonin (the hormone that promotes sleepiness) in order to keep you alert to the stimulation.



Think how you can remain alert while staying up late to watch a good movie, yet if you were at a dark campsite, you might easily fall asleep much earlier in the evening. Excess artificial light and chronically elevated cortisol also promote carbohydrate cravings in an effort to boost energy at a time when the body really wishes to get primed for sleep.

As we have learned, consuming carbohydrates provides a quick energy spike, followed by the release of insulin. The insulin release suppresses melatonin and prompts the release of more stress hormones into the bloodstream upon the insulin-triggered decline of blood glucose. While this crash and burn cycle is unpleasant enough during

the day, it is particularly troubling to disturb optimal hormone balance before bedtime. With stress hormones elevated before bedtime, you may experience difficulty falling asleep because melatonin is suppressed. Furthermore, you may experience a "suppression" of the adaptive hormones (human growth hormone and others) that typically peak during sleep to promote optimal restoration and recovery from stress, and a suppression of immune function, since the routine overnight rebuilding and restoration of the immune system is also compromised.

Primal enthusiasts and clients eager to reduce excess body fat through Primal-aligned eating should maintain awareness of the importance of optimal sleep and stress management techniques--falling short in these areas can reduce the effectiveness of an excellent eating and exercise pattern.



Sick and Tired

The Harvard Women's Health Watch, through Harvard health publishing released a paper indicating the Importance of Sleep :

Six reasons not to scrimp on sleep

A recent survey found that more people are sleeping less than six hours a night, and sleep difficulties visit 75% of us at least a few nights per week. A short-lived bout of insomnia is generally nothing to worry about. The bigger concern is chronic sleep loss, which can contribute to health problems such as weight gain, high blood pressure, and a decrease in the immune system's power, reports the Harvard Women's Health Watch.

While more research is needed to explore the links between chronic sleep loss and health, it's safe to say that sleep is too important to shortchange.

The Harvard Women's Health Watch suggests six reasons to get enough sleep:

1. Learning and memory: Sleep helps the brain commit new information to memory through a process called memory consolidation. In studies, people who'd slept after learning a task did better on tests later.
2. Metabolism and weight: Chronic sleep deprivation may cause weight gain by affecting the way our bodies process and store carbohydrates, and by altering levels of hormones that affect our appetite.
3. Safety: Sleep debt contributes to a greater tendency to fall asleep during the daytime. These lapses may cause falls and mistakes such as medical errors, air traffic mishaps, and road accidents.
4. Mood: Sleep loss may result in irritability, impatience, inability to concentrate, and moodiness. Too little sleep can also leave you too tired to do the things you like to do.
5. Cardiovascular health: Serious sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, increased stress hormone levels, and irregular heartbeat.
6. Disease: Sleep deprivation alters immune function, including the activity of the body's killer cells. Keeping up with sleep may also help fight cancer.

With additional research taken from the National Institutes of Health, T.S. Wiley and Bent Formby deliver staggering findings: Americans really are sick from being tired. Diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and depression are rising in our population. We're literally dying for a good night's sleep.

Our lifestyle wasn't always this way. It began with the invention of the lightbulb. When we don't get enough sleep in sync with seasonal light exposure, we fundamentally alter a balance of nature that has been programmed into our physiology since Day One. This delicate biological rhythm rules the hormones and neurotransmitters that determine appetite, fertility, and mental and physical health. When we rely on artificial light to extend our day until 11 PM, midnight, and beyond, we fool our bodies into living in a perpetual state of summer. Anticipating the scarce food supply and forced inactivity of winter, our bodies begin storing fat and slowing metabolism to sustain us through the months of hibernation and hunger that never arrive.

Our own survival instinct, honed over millennia, is now killing us.

...So, there you have it. Some pretty compelling facts and opinions to help you understand the importance of sleep in overall and health weight management.

Pleasant dreams 😊

Living Aligned Health Coach Service

Thank you for taking the time read this post. If you find any of the information valuable and would like to find out more information regarding the benefits a health coach can provide, or if you are interested in setting up a consultation. Contact Vern Gorman at livingalignedhc@gmail.com or through the website www.livingalignedhealthcoach.com

