YOUR BODY AND SLEEP
❦ HARNESS THE ELIXIR OF LIFE ❦

Are you getting enough sleep? Ask yourself two questions

After waking up in the morning, do you feel the need to take a nap by 10:00 or 11:00 a.m.?

Do you need caffeine to function well before noon?

If the answer is "yes" to either or both questions, you are likely not getting enough sleep or are lacking in quality sleep. And poor sleep starts you on the slow road to poor health, compromised mental aptitude, and even death.

To get sleep working to your advantage, focus on quantity, quality, and regularity. You need more than seven hours to maintain optimal performance physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Follow these 12 tips for good sleep.*

*Sleep tips adapted from National Institutes of Health. "Your Guide to Healthy Sleep."

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1. **Stick to a sleep schedule.**
   Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekend. We are creatures of habit and have a difficult time adjusting to changes in sleep patterns, even if they are small.

2. **Exercise.**
   Exercise can help you to feel tired at night but don't exercise two to three hours before bedtime. It can wind up your energy and make it difficult to fall asleep.

3. **Avoid caffeine, especially in the afternoons or evenings.**
   Caffeine can last for 10–14 hours in your system, making it difficult for you to fall asleep.

4. **Avoid alcohol before bed.**
   Alcohol robs you of REM sleep and may impair your breathing during the night.

5. **Avoid large meals and beverages closer to bedtime.**
   A large meal can cause indigestion, and too many fluids may create the urge to run to the bathroom throughout the night.

6. **Don't nap after 3:00 p.m.**
   A brief nap can help you get through the day, but if you sleep too late in the day, it can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

7. **Unwind before bed.**
   Find a relaxing activity to help your mind disengage from the day and prepare for rest and recovery.

8. **Cool your bedroom.**
   Your body temperature increases throughout the day and begins to decrease in mid-afternoon. A cool bedroom, 65°F/18°C, will help you to fall asleep and stay asleep.

9. **Darken your room.**
   Your circadian rhythm is driven by light. If you have lights on in your room or don't block the outside light, it can wreak havoc on its cycle.

10. **Minimize electronics.**
    Technology in the bedroom can create bad habits that are detrimental to sleep. Also, exposure to blue light can interfere with your circadian rhythm which negatively impacts your sleep.

11. **Have the right daylight exposure.**
    Daylight is key to regulating daily sleep patterns. Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day and turn down the lights before bedtime.

12. **Don't lie in bed awake.**
    If you're still awake for more than 20 minutes, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy.

#outhappyeveryone

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