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The Importance of Sleep

PT Corner

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Sleep or getting adequate rest is now considered one of the three main pillars of good health along with adequate exercise and proper nutrition. Yet most Americans get too little sleep. A recent study published in the Mayo Clinic Proceedings found less than 3% of us meet the minimal standards of sleep for a healthy lifestyle. Adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep per the CDC, but more importantly for most of us is the amount of quality sleep or deep sleep per night. As we age there are many factors that can influence sleep patterns making it harder to get this deep sleep or the REM required to rejuvenate the body, thus making us feel rested in the morning. Lack of sleep has been shown to increase risk for chronic diseases and auto accidents while decreasing mental and physical

level and leading to more time off work and lost wages.

A sleep routine that includes going to bed and getting up at the same time each day (even weekends), avoiding caffeine later in the day and alcohol at night, creating a peaceful room and trying to read or meditate quietly before bedtime can help. So can avoiding electronic devices which emit a blue light that stimulates the brain. No texting, emailing, or watching TV in the bedroom. Use the “Do Not Disturb” function on your phone, and place it face down.

Try to limit naps during the day. This can become a vicious cycle where less sleep at night leads to more frequent naps during the day. Take a 30 min. or less nap, not too late in the day. Exercise (even walking) can promote better sleep. And

finally, manage your stress with meditation, yoga, or quiet time. Asking for help if you need it and becoming more organized can both help reduce stress and activity as well as leading to more restful sleep.

Putting as much value on sleep as we do on exercise and nutrition will go a long way toward helping you lead a healthier lifestyle. Exercise, diet and sleep are all interlinked and determine how we function on a daily basis. Without adequate sleep the other two pillars will be compromised. This is why many fitness watches also track your amount of sleep, not just your activity level over 24 hours. Most medical professionals and personal trainers include sleep in their lifestyle screen while addressing nutrition and stress. Sleep really needs to be thought of as a main pillar toward success, happiness and well-being.



TIP FROM A TRAINER *by Trip Harlan*

One Simple Change

Don't feel bad if you haven't followed through on your New Year's resolutions. Only 8% of people keep their resolutions, 80% of them failing by February! Sometimes we set too many goals or get derailed by small failures.

Good health does not need to be difficult. One simple change each month can make a big difference in your overall health.

Choose to make one simple change in each of the 4 categories below:

- Eat more whole foods
- Drink more water
- Get more exercise
- Sleep more, Stress less

When you make the decision to improve your health, it may seem overwhelming and difficult. Follow these steps to achieve success:

- Set a goal
- Make a plan and write it down
- Form healthy habits
- Be accountable

Don't try to tackle everything at once. Incorporate your new healthy habits today. These simple changes will add up to big lifestyle improvements.