How To Get A Good Night’s Sleep And Benefit From It
The mission of AIS is to improve the health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence of stress management in education, research, clinical care and the workplace. Diverse and inclusive, The American Institute of Stress educates medical practitioners, scientists, health care professionals and the public; conducts research; and provides information, training and techniques to prevent human illness related to stress.

AIS provides a diverse and inclusive environment that fosters intellectual discovery, creates and transmits innovative knowledge, improves human health, and provides leadership to the world on stress related topics.
Contentment is a quarterly newsletter published in March, June, September and December with news and advertising designed with the general public in mind. It appeals to all those interested in the myriad and complex interrelationships between stress and health because technical jargon is avoided and it is easy to understand. Contentment is archived online at stress.org. Information in this publication is carefully compiled to ensure accuracy.

Copyright © 2016 the American Institute of Stress (AIS). All rights reserved. All materials on AIS’ website and in AIS’ newsletters are the property of AIS and may not be copied, reproduced, sold, or distributed without permission. For permission, contact editor@stress.org. Liberal use of AIS fact sheets and news releases is allowable with attribution. Please use the following: "Reproduced from the American Institute of Stress website [or newsletter], © AIS [year]."

**AIS Daily Life Stress Board**

Chaired by Dr. Michel Woodbury-Farina, the role of this board is to develop initiatives and communications to serve the stress management needs of all people.

Michel Woodbury-Farina, MD, FAIS
Cynthia Ackrill, MD, FAIS
Heidi Hanna, PhD, FAIS
Sandra Thebaud, PhD, FAIS
David Sollars, MAc, LAc, HMC, DAIS
Daniel L. Kirsch, PhD, DAAPM, FAIS
Study identifies specific work factors that predict sleep problems


Sleep problems induce greater response to stress in adolescents

The Latest Headlines…

**Alcohol exposure during adolescence leads to chronic stress vulnerability**


**Adding stress management to cardiac rehab cuts new incidents in half**

James A. Blumenthal, Andrew Sherwood, Patrick J. Smith, Lana Watkins, Stephanie Mabe, William E. Kraus, Krista Ingle, Paula Miller, Alan Hinderliter. Enhancing Cardiac Rehabilitation With Stress Management Training: A Randomized Clinical Efficacy Trial. Circulation, 2016; CIRCULATIONAHA.115.018926 DOI: [10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.115.018926](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.115.018926)

**How stress can tweak the brain to sabotage self-control**

How To Get A Good Night’s Sleep And Benefit From It

By Sandra Thebaud, Ph.D

Do you find it difficult to get 7-8 hours of sleep on a regular basis? Are you having trouble falling asleep? Do you wake up in the middle of the night and can’t get back to sleep?

There’s a very important reason why we spend one-third of our lives asleep. Sleep is so vital that even when mankind was living in caves without the protection of doors or alarms vulnerable to predators, we slept. Sleep plays a critical role in keeping us mentally, physically and emotionally sound.

What Is Sleep Anyway?

Sleep is more complicated than just being the opposite of being awake. Sleep has a well-organized structure to it and occurs in a cyclical pattern.

First of all, sleep is divided into two types. The first is called REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. It is characterized, as its name suggests, by rapid movements of the eyes under the eye lids and usually indicates that the sleeper is currently dreaming.

The second type is called NREM (non-rapid eye movement) sleep. This type contains 4 stages which can be characterized by specific changes in brain wave activity. It is also a non-dreaming state.

Here’s how it works. After feeling sleepy and going to bed, you enter stage 1. This is a very light sleep that lasts only a few minutes. Next is stage 2, which most people would recognize as being asleep. After several minutes, you move into stages 3 and 4. These stages are distinguished from stages 1 and 2 by your brain waves. As far as you’re concerned, it’s still sleep.

By now, you’ve been asleep for approximately 90 minutes and are about to enter your first REM period. This will be the shortest REM period of the night – about 5-15 minutes. REM periods get longer and longer after every 90 minute cycle. Unless someone wakes you right now, it’s unlikely you’ll remember this dream.

After this REM period, you’ll start the cycle all over again beginning with stage 2. If there’s any noise in your environment, you may wake up. Otherwise, you’ll progress to stages 3 and 4. Once another 90 minutes has gone by, you’ll enter another REM period.

You’ll keep cycling back through stage 2, then 3, then 4 and REM approximately every 90 minutes with each REM period taking up more and more of that time until you awaken for the day.
Your Subconscious Is The Key To A Good Night’s Sleep

There are many things that you can do to improve your sleep. For example, avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, heavy meals and exercise at least 4 hours before bedtime. Minimize noise, light and excessive temperature at night. Do not take naps during the day and try to wake at the same time every day.

But what do you do if you’ve been suffering from poor sleep for a very long time? Most people with poor sleep have been tolerating it for years. For sleep therapy to be effective, it must include a cognitive restructuring of your beliefs around sleep.

The difference between people who sleep well and those who don’t is in their minds. People who sleep well think differently than people who don’t. People who have trouble sleeping have beliefs such as

- The older you get, the less sleep you get
- If I don’t get a good night’s sleep, I’ll be a wreck the next day
- I should be able to fall asleep in minutes
- I can’t get a good night’s sleep without a sleeping pill
- I just don’t sleep well

These beliefs are not exactly accurate. For example,

- Not all older people have trouble sleeping
- It’s possible to function just fine on a poor night’s sleep
- People vary in how fast they fall asleep
- Your body knows how to sleep; it just needs to relearn how
- Poor sleep is neither a personality characteristic nor part of your identity unless you make it so

Strange But True Facts About Sleep

- Almost everyone has experienced an occasional poor night’s sleep. It’s normal and if you don’t stress out about it, it remains a temporary experience.
- At best you’ll recover 25-30% of lost sleep by sleeping in on the weekends.
- Some drugs and medications can affect sleep.
- Alcohol may make you fall asleep faster but it disrupts the structure of sleep making it more likely that your sleep will be shorter and less restorative.
- Caffeine has a half-life of 3-7 hours. That means half of the caffeine you ingested is still in your system 3-7 hours later.
- If you’re a smoker, your body goes through withdrawal at night and can disrupt your system enough to wake you in the night without you realizing why.
- Unless you live in the middle of nowhere, there’s always occasional noise outside. Most people wake up to 7 times a night but it’s so brief that they don’t remember it.
- Almost everyone has experienced an occasional poor night’s sleep. It’s normal and if you don’t stress out about it, it remains a temporary experience.
- At best you’ll recover 25-30% of lost sleep by sleeping in on the weekends.
- Some drugs and medications can affect sleep.
- Alcohol may make you fall asleep faster but it disrupts the structure of sleep making it more likely that your sleep will be shorter and less restorative.
- Caffeine has a half-life of 3-7 hours. That means half of the caffeine you ingested is still in your system 3-7 hours later.
- If you’re a smoker, your body goes through withdrawal at night and can disrupt your system enough to wake you in the night without you realizing why.
- Unless you live in the middle of nowhere, there’s always occasional noise outside. Most people wake up to 7 times a night but it’s so brief that they don’t remember it.
People who sleep well do so because they don’t have beliefs that contribute to poor sleep. This is what makes the cognitive portion of sleep therapy so vital. No sleep restructuring program is complete without a restructuring of your beliefs about sleep.

**Just How Powerful Is Your Mind?**

The mind-body connection is not just lip service. Studies on the placebo effect prove that the mind has power over our ability to heal. Every thought and emotion you experience has a corresponding neurochemical and hormonal output. Your subconscious beliefs and their corresponding neurochemical and hormonal outputs influence how you sleep.

In the early 1900s, Émile Coué, a French pharmacist, believed that our imaginations were more powerful than medication. He noticed how, when someone said that a certain stressful incident was bound to give them a headache, that person actually ended up with a headache.

He believed that if people could talk themselves into getting sick, then they could talk themselves into becoming well.

So, when he gave his patients medicine, he told them how well it worked for the symptoms his patients suffered from. He also noticed that his patients’ symptoms improved more when he praised the medicine he was giving them rather than when he didn’t.

He began instructing his patients to tell themselves, “Every day in every way, I am getting better and better.” He had them repeat this phrase over and over again in a relaxed state every day. And many of his patients got better!

If you believe that poor sleep is a part of your nature, a function of age or something only a sleeping pill can help you avoid, then your body will react to these beliefs and make them true for you.

**New Beliefs For A Good Night’s Sleep**

The good news is you don’t need willpower or determination to change your subconscious beliefs.

Imagine if you could access the limiting beliefs in your subconscious mind and change them. You could improve your sleep (or any other aspect of your life). Imagine if you chose to stop tolerating temporary solutions and deal with the root cause of your sleep problems.

Sleeping pills are an acceptable short term solution. Sleep hygiene rules are a great short term solution. Changing your beliefs is the only long term solution.

Is it necessary to struggle to improve your sleep? Only when you fail to realize that it’s your subconscious beliefs that you’re really struggling against.

Reach Sandra Thebaud, Ph.D. at 720-378-8080 or by visiting www.artoflovinglife.com.
GET INSIDE OUR HEAD

It’s Not Our Credentials That Make AIS So Impressive, It’s the Fellows That Go with Them.

The American Institute of Stress is a non-profit organization established in 1978 at the request of Dr. Hans Selye (the Founder of the Stress Concept) to serve as a clearinghouse for information on all stress related subjects. AIS Founding Fellows include:

Paul Rosch  Linus Pauling  Alvin Toffler  Bob Hope  Michael DeBakey  Herbert Benson  Charles Spielberger

Join our prominent psychologists, physicians, other health care practitioners and health conscious individuals who are interested in exploring the multitudinous and varied effects of stress on our health and quality of life.

The American Institute of Stress invites YOU to enhance your credentials with FAIS and add your name to our Gallery of Distinguished Fellows.

Over the last 35 years, we’ve expanded our services and broadened our reach, but our dedication to science hasn’t changed a bit.

Our four focus areas include:

We produce three e-magazines focused on different stress related topics...

Visit stress.org to download your FAIS or DAIS application

The American Institute of Stress

This is to certify that
Imagine YOUR Name Here
Having satisfied the requirements for education, training and experience, is duly qualified and has been elected to the status of Fellow of the American Institute of Stress

American Institute of Stress
9112 Camp Bowie West Blvd. #228
Fort Worth, TX 76116

USA Main: (682) 239-6823
Fax: (817) 394-0593
Email: info@stress.org

www.stress.org
First we got your brain...

Now we need your heart.

The American Institute of Stress helps people learn to manage their stress every single day. We help veterans returning from war find a sense of normalcy again. We help students who are stressed about exams, busy schedules and bullies reach their fullest potential. And we help people like you deal with whatever life throws at you! With your ongoing support, we will continue to be there providing people with relief for today and hope for tomorrow.

Click to Donate: Easy!
Sleep is not just about giving our system a rest. It is also the time when our body and brain do some of their most important work to repair and rebuild muscle tissue and strengthen neural connections that improve learning and memory. The area of the brain that may be most affected by sleep, or lack of it, is the prefrontal cortex -- the part that’s responsible for executive functioning processes such as learning, judgment, reasoning, memory consolidation, and understanding.

Sleep deprivation and sleepiness have adverse effects on performance, response times, accuracy, attention, and concentration. Lack of quality sleep has been associated with a wide range of quality-of-life measures such as social functioning, mental and physical health – even early death. It’s also been correlated with obesity, increases in smoking and alcohol use, inactivity, inflammation and heart disease, and blood sugar imbalances.

Most people are well aware that they should be getting more sleep but fail to make it a priority because there are so many other things that could or should be getting done. We convince ourselves we’ll just do “one more thing” before bed. Then, before you know it, precious hours slip mindlessly, and sleeplessly, on by. In order to get the adequate sleep we need to fully rest, it’s important that we make bedtime a priority, try to stick with a consistent routine, and establish bedtime rituals that support a better quality of sleep once we do get there.
While some activities can assist you in falling and staying asleep long enough to feel rested, there are others that you should avoid before bedtime. Here are a few tips for sleeping well:

1. Go to bed early.
   Some studies suggest that early to bed and early to rise is more suited for our natural rhythms.

2. Don’t toss and turn.
   If you have trouble falling asleep, don’t just lie there. Go do something relaxing until you feel sleepy.

3. Limit naps.
   Napping can be helpful to recharge your energy, but be sure to keep them brief. Nap only for less than an hour, and always before 3 p.m.

4. Wake up at the same time on the weekend that you do on weekdays.
   Though it’s tempting to sleep till noon, on your days off, it is best to go to keep timing consistent. This enables you to build a steady pattern around your sleep schedule.

5. Avoid late-day caffeine.
   Don’t consume caffeine in the afternoon and at night. It stays in your system for hours and can make it hard for you to fall asleep.

6. Adjust the lights in your bedroom.
   Dim the lights in the evening so your body knows it will soon be time to sleep. Let in the sunlight in the morning to boost your alertness.
Eat a little.

Never eat a large meal right before bedtime. While it may cause you to feel drowsy, your body will have to work hard to process all of that food, which can actually stimulate your system. You can enjoy a healthy snack or light dessert (such as a handful of almonds or a small bowl of frozen blueberries with yogurt) so you don’t go to bed hungry.

Turn off technology.

Take some time to wind down before going to bed. Get away from the computer, turn off the TV and your cell phone, and relax quietly for 15–30 minutes. Parents should keep TVs and computers out of their children’s bedrooms.

Avoid alcohol right before bed.

While it seems like a drink or two may help you fall asleep, it may also keep you from getting the quality of sleep you need. The body quickly metabolizes alcohol, which has a stimulating effect on the brain. This disrupts sleep, even when you don’t wake up.

Keep a notebook handy.

As the brain begins to relax, we tend to have some of our most creative ideas. The challenge is trying to retain these ah-ha moments for morning can cause stress. Jot down any new ideas, to-do list items or nagging thoughts on a piece of paper so you can let your brilliant brain get the rest it needs to put things into action in the morning.
Not a subscriber?

Have “Contentment” delivered to your inbox each quarter!

The American Institute of Stress
6387B Camp Bowie Blvd #334
Fort Worth, TX  76116
www.stress.org

info@stress.org
Main: (682)239-6823
Fax: 817-394-0593

The American Institute of Stress is a qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

ISSN # 108-148X