

Sweet Dreams

*Don't let a lack of sleep
sabotage your health
—or your diet*

ALTHOUGH SEEMINGLY MUNDANE, THERE ARE FEW EXPERIENCES AS SWEET AS WAKING UP FEELING WELL RESTED, REFRESHED AND REJUVENATED.

Greeting the new day with the mind focused and the body fine-tuned creates the sense of limitless possibilities, as though there's nothing preventing us from plucking the juiciest fruit from the orchard of life.

But if instead of harvesting the riches of rest, you wake up feeling withered on the vine, you're not alone. According to the 2005 National Sleep Foundation (NSF) poll, seven in ten American adults say they experience frequent sleep problems and one in four say their sleep problems have some impact on their daily lives.

It's hardly a surprise that we aren't reaping the benefits of shuteye, given the prevalence of sleep deprivation in our society. Although sleep experts recommend that adults get seven to nine hours of sleep each night, Americans average only 6.9 hours. Sixteen percent of adults sleep less than six hours on weekdays, reports the NSF, and 10% sleep less than six hours on weekends. This results in what experts term a "sleep debt," an accumulation of missed hours of rest.

Our sleep debt has a direct effect on our health and well-being, says Richard L. Gelula, NSF's chief executive officer. "People who sleep well, in general, are happier and healthier. But when sleep is poor or inadequate, people feel tired or fatigued, their social and intimate relationships suffer, work productivity is negatively affected, and they make our roads more dangerous by driving while sleepy and less alert."

Busy lifestyles and the 24/7 availability of everything from electricity to email contribute to sleep deprivation, asserts Dr. Gerard Lombardo, director of New York Methodist Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center. "Our technology outstrips our physiology," he says. Although we're genetically programmed to respect light and darkness, "We have a 24/7 economy where you can plug into the Internet at three a.m. with a light bulb shining over your shoulder. All the milk and turkey in the world won't help that."

Lombardo, author of the upcoming *Sleep to Save Your Life: The Complete Guide to Living Longer and Healthier through Restorative Sleep* (2005, HarperResource, \$24.95), says that sleep, together with proper diet and exercise, comprise the trinity of good health. "We

are 24-hour beings, and we have to start thinking about sleep as part of that 24-hour experience." Good sleep habits, he says, are as important as proper nutrition and exercise in achieving health and longevity.

Robert deStefano heard the proverbial wake-up call when the dot-com bust left this self-described "world-class, gold-medal-winning insomniac" unemployed for the first time in 20 years. No longer writing ad agency commercials at two in the morning, deStefano was ready to tackle his insomnia holistically. "I didn't want to pursue a pharmaceutical approach, since I have a low tolerance for over-the-counter medications," he says. Instead, deStefano tried cognitive-behavioral changes. Late-night Web-surfing was off-limits and the late-late shows on TV were verboten. Still, deStefano couldn't find the key to calming his overactive mind. Finally, he and his partner hit upon the notion that both music and brainwaves are based on tempos and frequencies. They developed The Zzone Sleep Solution, music that is scientifically composed to calm those brainwaves and, he says, "shift away from the critical mind and let your body do what it was meant to do."

deStefano says the switch from insomnia to a state of restfulness has changed his life. "I've always been fairly driven and ambitious," he says, "but being rested gives you that internal fortitude. It's amazing how powerful a clear head – not driven by caffeine or dragged down by sleep deprivation – can be."

"If you want to take on the world," deStefano says, "you have to be your best. We acclimate ourselves to so many situations. You can count the Starbucks on every corner and see how we treat our sleep deprivation."

According to Lombardo, that triple espresso is a recipe for sleep disaster. "Good sleep hygiene includes a set of dietary guidelines, some of which are commonsense," he says. "You should not consume foods or beverages containing caffeine."

Beyond nixing the late-night coffee, Lombardo's rule of thumb is, "Eat after eight, that's too late." He says that the body isn't programmed to sleep after a large meal, especially one that contains a lot of protein and simple sugars. If you must have a small snack before bed, Lombardo suggests a small amount of protein together with a complex carbohydrate. Bedtime food choices – and dietary choices in general – can have a significant impact on the quality of sleep. Foods high in tryptophan, such as turkey and milk products, have

Rate Your SLEEP STYLE

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) identifies five sleep profiles. Which best fits you?

Healthy, Lively Larks ● Typically in good health, the Lark considers her or himself a "morning person," usually gets a good night's sleep and rarely feels tired. She or he averages 44.5 years of age, is married and works full-time on the day shift.

Sleep Savvy Seniors ● Averaging over seven hours of sleep a night, the Senior is likely to be around 60 years old, take two or more naps each week and is almost never fatigued. She's most likely a woman and is least likely to be employed.

Dragging Duos ● Most likely to be partnered and employed, the Dragging Duo works more than 40 hours each week and often does job-related work within an hour of going to bed. She or he is an early riser and gets less sleep than she or he needs to function at their best. Their partner's sleep problems, or their own, cause problems in the relationship, and intimacy may be affected because of sleepiness.

Overworked, Overweight and Over-Caffeinated ● A self-defined "night owl," he has the longest workweek and is least likely to work a regular day shift. He sleeps less but naps more, and drinks more caffeine than other groups. With frequent insomnia, the OOOO is likely to be male.

Sleepless and Missin' the Kissin' ● A night owl, she or he is least likely to say they get a good night's sleep and is more likely to think they have a sleep problem. She or he usually feels fatigued and are more likely to have sleep-related relationship problems. She or he has been diagnosed with a medical condition and is likely to use sleep aids.

Resources

If you're one of the millions of Americans who isn't getting the quality or quantity of sleep you need, these slumber aids might help.

■ The Zzone Sleep Solution

A breakthrough in sleep music technology, the Zzone Sleep Solution is composed to resonate with brainwaves in order to guide the listener into a state of relaxation and sleep. This kit includes a guided relaxation CD, an informational CD by designer Robert deStefano, and a user-friendly guidebook to help you find a better night's sleep. (Sleep Garden, \$39.99)

■ Sleep to Save Your Life: The Complete Guide to Living Longer and Healthier through Restorative Sleep

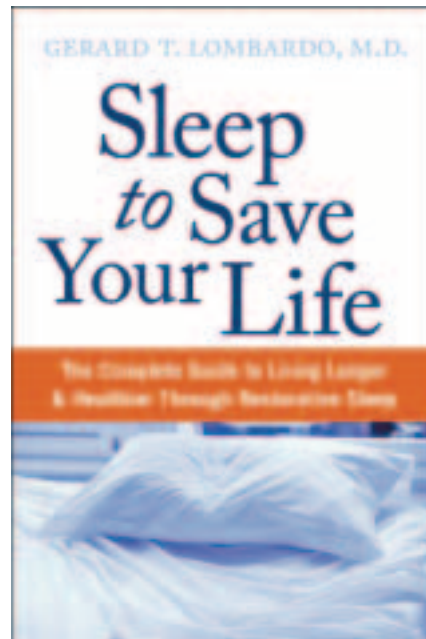
Just about every segment of the population is covered in this book by Dr. Gerard T. Lombardo, Director of New York Methodist Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center. Whether you want to know more about children's sleep disorders, the effect that PMS or menopause has on women's sleep, the special problems that shift workers face, sleep in the elderly, or the myriad of sleep disorders, this book is chock-full of information that is easily accessible to the layperson. (2005, HarperResource, \$24.95)

■ The Good Nights Sleep Kit: The Essential Tool for Restful Sleep

Once again, Deepok Chopra synthesizes Eastern and Western medicine and spirituality, this time to help you achieve a good night's sleep. The kit includes a body type test to help you pinpoint your individual needs, along with a booklet and cards filled with tips. Homeopathic aromatherapy oil, a meditation CD and a dream journal complete this collection of tools. (2005, Hay House, \$24.95)

■ National Sleep Foundation

The website of this non-profit organization has an incredible depth and breadth of information about sleep issues and sleep disorders, including useful self-assessment tools. Spending some time at www.sleepfoundation.org is a great place to collect tips and tools for better sleep.



a positive impact on melatonin, serotonin and other brain chemicals.

Lombardo emphasizes the role that diet plays in quality sleep. "When you go to bed, you don't only take the stress of the day with you. You take whatever you ate to bed with you. You carry your metabolic baggage with you. A poor diet will have an impact on your sleep."

And poor sleep will have an impact on your waistline. Researchers have discovered a connection between sleep deprivation and leptin, a chemical that controls hunger and satiety. In what Lombardo calls "a chicken and egg scenario," sleep deprivation sets off a sequence of biochemical events that lowers the levels of leptin. The low level of leptin signals the brain that more food is needed. More food is eaten, which leads to poor sleep. And so the cycle continues.

Indeed, researchers at Columbia University found that those who slept four hours

or less per night were 73% more likely to be obese than those who slept the recommended seven to nine hours each night. The NSF poll found that those considered obese are more likely to get less than six hours of sleep on weeknights and frequently have daytime sleepiness.

The key, says Lombardo, is to have a sleep plan that allows our metabolism to get the rest that it needs. During sleep, heart rate, blood pressure and metabolic rate all decrease – all of which are vitally important to our health. "We should plan for our metabolic relaxation. Exercise well and eat intelligently during the day."

Although much research has been devoted to the science of sleep, answers to why slumber is so beneficial have been elusive. The reigning theory is that sleep allows our brains to consolidate our memories and enables the recovery of our organs and metabolism. But regardless of the science, sowing the seeds of good sleep habits and reaping the benefits of eight hours – or whatever your body needs – of shut-eye is crucial to our health and well-being.

Good nutrition, exercise and sleep are the triumvirate of good health, but sleep often takes a back seat to the other two. Yet, as Lombardo reminds us, "Next time you talk to a 90-year-old, remember that it took him or her 30 years of sleep to get there."♦



Sleep Disorders

While many sleep problems can be corrected by cognitive-behavioral changes in sleep habits, other problems require medical treatment. Below is an outline of three sleep disorders. Because they can have long-term negative health consequences, if you think you have a sleep disorder, you should be seen by a sleep medicine specialist.

NAME	Sleep Apnea	Restless Legs Syndrome	Narcolepsy
SYMPTOMS	Severe snoring; awoken during night with choking sensations; breathing pauses during sleep; snorting or gasping after breathing pauses; daytime sleepiness.	Creeping, crawling, tingling or pulling sensations in one or both legs during periods of decreased activity, usually during the evening and night hours; irresistible urge to move legs when sensations occur.	Excessive daytime sleepiness; sudden loss of muscle function triggered by emotional reactions; temporary inability to move or talk while falling asleep or waking up; vivid dream-like experiences while dozing or falling asleep
RISK FACTORS /CAUSES	Heredity; severe obesity; abnormalities in the structure of the upper airway.	Heredity; anemia; medical conditions, such as kidney failure, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and neuropathy.	Heredity; other causes unknown
DIAGNOSED	Sleep study using polysomnography to record electrical activity of brain, eye movement, muscle activity, heart rate, respiration effort, air flow and blood oxygen levels.	Evaluation of self-reported symptoms; physical and neurological exam to identify related medical conditions; blood test to rule out anemia.	Evaluation of self-reported symptoms; sleep study, using polysomnogram to record brain waves and nerve and muscle function; multiple sleep latency test to measure the degree of daytime sleepiness
TREATMENT	For mild sleep apnea, devices to maintain side position in sleep or dental appliances that reposition jaw and tongue. For severe sleep apnea, nasal continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), consisting of a mask and an air blower that prevents the throat from collapsing during sleep.	Medication, including central nervous system depressants, painkillers or relaxation drugs; TENS applied to legs and feet before bedtime	Medication, including central nervous system stimulants, antidepressants and REM-suppressing drugs; 10-15 minute daytime naps

Source: National Center on Sleep Disorders Research, National Institutes of Health

