

Things Go Better With Sleep!

You're having a "feel great" day. You're already part way through your to-do list, you've been patient with the kids, and even without that second cup of coffee you are alert and energized. So what's up with that? It could all be due to a good night's sleep (or several). If feeling this good is rare, ask yourself if you are getting enough sleep.

"But," you insist, "I don't have time to sleep seven or eight hours a night. I'm too busy!" Are you? In a *Wall Street Journal* article titled "Are you as busy as you think?" author Laura Vanderkam says, "Plenty of Americans have faulty impressions of how they spend time in our 'too-rushed-to-breathe' world." She suggests keeping a time log for a week. Be honest, pay attention to how much sleep you really do get, and what you spend your time on (maybe instead of sleeping). She also suggests changing your language: Instead of saying, "I don't have time," try saying, "It's not a priority," to help remind you that how you spend your time is often a choice.

Maybe sleeping is *not* a priority for you, or you think it's just a waste of time. Pay attention to how you feel and act when you aren't sleep deprived. You could begin to see the importance of getting enough sleep. Some effects of sleeplessness aren't as obvious. Camille Peri writes, "You may not know what it can do to your sex life, memory, health, looks, and even ability to lose weight. Here are 10 surprising—and serious—effects of sleep loss." You can read the full article titled "10 Things to Hate About Sleep Loss" at <www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/excessive-sleepiness-10/10-results-sleep-loss>.

Okay, I'm convinced. How do I get better sleep?

- **Turn off your cellphone at bedtime.** In an article titled "Electronic Glow Affecting Americans' Sleep" published in *USA Today*, author Sophie Terbush states: "Those who use a cellphone right before trying to go to sleep reported they were less likely to get a good night's sleep, more likely to wake up feeling unrefreshed, more likely to feel 'sleepy,' and more likely to drive while drowsy." In the survey, 37 percent said they drive while drowsy at least once a month.
- **If you have to miss sleep, take a 20-minute nap during the day.** You'll feel better and be more productive. A short afternoon nap shouldn't interfere with your sleep routine.
- **Don't drink caffeinated beverages after 4 p.m.** Even if you don't have trouble falling asleep, caffeine can decrease the quality of your sleep and shorten the time you sleep. For some, even decaffeinated beverages have enough caffeine in them to affect the quality of sleep. Caffeine is the Number One "drug-related" cause of insomnia.
- **See your doctor if you think you might have a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea or insomnia.** If you're not sure, visit the National Sleep Foundations (NSF) Web site at www.sleepfoundation.org for a wealth of information on sleep issues. Find out how you score on the "sleepiness scale" by taking the online Epworth Sleep Quiz. Enter "quiz" in the search box.
- **On a lighter note, visit NSF's "Just for Fun" page for the top 100 sleep-related songs, movies, and lullabies.**



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