

# Fit Brain Fit Life

## Have a Bedtime for Your Brain



### Top 5 Tips to a Goodnight's Sleep

1. Stay away from caffeine after 2pm.
2. Sleep in a dark room to and keep it cool to support your circadian rhythm.
3. Avoid all electronic devices at least an hour before bed, including television.
4. Don't exercise within 2 hours of your typical bedtime.
5. Write in a journal, read a devotion, or meditate to release thoughts that cloud your mind.

Sources:

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Understanding-Sleep>

<https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/info-2014/sleep-for-brain-health.html>

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/brain-may-flush-out-toxins-during-sleep>

### Why is Sleep So Important for Brain Health?

*A good night's sleep may literally clear your mind...*

Sleep affects every system in the body. The brain is no exception. And while sleep is an opportunity for us to be at complete rest, this is not the purpose of sleep for the brain. The brain never truly has a "shutoff" point, in fact it remains remarkably active throughout your sleep cycle.

Research shows that sleep is a time for housekeeping through a system in the brain now termed the glymphatic system. The secretion of beneficial chemicals during the sleep cycle have the ability to repair the body and the brain. These chemicals help to clean up oxidative damage and clear the pathways for learning and many other brain functions. For this reason, chronic sleep deprivation can increase the build up of amyloid plaque linked to Alzheimer's, contribute to the risk of cognitive decline and memory loss. Too little sleep makes it more difficult to function, reason, problem solve, recall...etc.

So how many hours of sleep are required for a fit brain and a fit life? On average, no less than 7-8 hours a night. But as with any lifestyle recommendation, quality over quantity! What matters is whether or not you get into deep sleep where the repair process actually takes place. If you have trouble sleeping, you may want to track your sleep electronically or participate in a sleep study to examine how much quality sleep you are getting, and whether forgetting your new co-worker's name 10 times could be connected to your sleep habits.