



Sleep Better

CHALLENGE

Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night

Test Your Sleep IQ

How much do you know about healthy sleep habits? Take the quiz to find out:



Y N

1. Do you watch TV or use digital devices in bed to fall asleep?
2. Do you snore or take sleep medication regularly?
3. Do you go to bed at random times during the week and on weekends?
4. Do you drink alcohol or caffeinated drinks in the afternoon or evening?
5. Do you get less than 7 to 8 hours of sleep most of the time?

How did you do? If you answered “yes” to any of these statements, you could probably take a nap right now. Right? Research shows that getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep is ideal for most adults. Why? Sleep helps improve health and prevent disease. If you don’t get enough sleep right now, making simple lifestyle changes can help.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Sleep Better.”
2. Create a plan to improve your sleep habits.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Randy Gardner was 17 years old, he wanted to win a high school science fair in San Diego, Calif. But to do that, he would need an epic project. Something that would defy the laws of science, the laws of nature. Maybe even redefine the human experience. What could he do?

Somewhere between that dream-like state and sunrise, the idea came to him.¹

- Go without sleep for 11 days (264 hours).
- Document the impact of sleep deprivation.
- Set a new world record in the process.

Think you could go without sleep for 11 days? Don’t try it. Lack of sleep (even a little) can have a negative impact on your mood, brain function, and decision-making skills. And over time, lack of sleep can increase your risk for chronic disease.

Gardner did set a new world record. He managed to stay awake for 11 days straight with the help of two friends, and a Stanford University researcher who drove him around in a convertible. Plus, he won the science fair.

It’s been 50-plus years since Gardner’s experiment. FYI...lack of sleep is no longer part of the Guinness Book of World Records. Why? Research proves it’s bad for your health.

So how much sleep should you get? And what can you do to get your Zzzs? Take the month-long health challenge: Sleep Better, and aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night.

Here’s what happens when you don’t get enough sleep
<https://tinyurl.com/rmhyrub5>



11 Dreamy Ways to Sleep Better

Want to be healthier, feel better, and live longer? Get 7 to 8 hours

of sleep a night, or the equivalent if you do shift work. Here are 11 ways to sleep better:

1. Ban digital devices before bed.

Shut off the TV, computer, tablet, phone, and any other digital devices an hour before bed. The light from their screens excites brain activity that can keep you from drifting off to dreamland.

2. Create a bedtime routine.

Do something before you go to sleep each night to help you get ready for bed. Take a warm bath. Read a book. Listen to soothing music. Make it a habit. It will help you relax and fall asleep faster.

3. Plan for Zzzs. Go to bed at the same time every night, even on weekends. When you stick to a regular sleep schedule, you'll sleep better.

4. Stage your room for sleep. Your bedroom should be dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool. Remove distractions like a TV, computer, or digital devices. Make sure your pillow, bedding, and sheets are comfortable.

5. Move more, sit less. Exercise helps reduce stress and improve mood. People who exercise fall asleep faster and sleep better than those who don't. Just don't exercise right before bed, or you'll be wide awake, not sleepy.

6. See the sun. Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes a day. Sun exposure helps increase melatonin levels in the part of your brain that controls sleep.

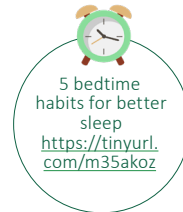
7. Curb the caffeine. Avoid coffee and other caffeinated drinks 6 to 8 hours before bed.

8. Avoid alcohol. It may make you feel drowsy. But alcohol can cause sleep problems. You wake up after a few hours and can't get back to sleep. Or your sleep isn't as deep, so you miss out on REM sleep. You might snore more

9. Munch meals earlier. Avoid eating late in the day and going to bed soon after stepping away from the table. Most people don't sleep well with a full stomach.

10. Can't sleep? Get up. If you can't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes after turning out the lights, get up. Do something to help you relax. Repeat your bedtime routine, and try again.

11. Get medical help. If you can't sleep, talk to your doctor. Some medications like steroids, pain relievers, and over-the-counter medicine can disrupt sleep. Your doctor can also diagnose and treat sleep disorders to help you get your Zzzs.



The Problem with a Sleep-Starved Lifestyle



Stay up late to watch your favorite TV show, or binge-watch an entire series. Work late. Help kids with homework. Go out with friends. Skimp on sleep.

Ever feel like you're living a sleep-starved lifestyle?

The occasional late-night might leave you feeling tired and groggy the next day. But that's minor compared to the long-term impact of poor sleep. Research shows that lack of sleep (less than 7 to 8 hours) on a regular basis can lead to:²

Diabetes. Lack of sleep causes blood sugar levels to rise. High levels cause your body to produce more insulin. Long-term, that's a recipe for type 2 diabetes.

Heart disease. If you don't get enough sleep on a regular basis, your risk for a heart attack goes up. It also raises your risk for high blood pressure. And that's a problem. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S.

Obesity. Stay up late, eat more junk food. It happens. But it's not the only reason poor sleep can lead to obesity. Lack of sleep can also slow metabolism and increase hormones linked to hunger and food cravings.

Depression. Data shows that lack of sleep raises the risk for depression and other mood disorders by 22 percent.³

Early death. Want to live a long and healthy life? Get enough sleep. Research suggests lack of sleep raises your risk for early death.⁴

References

1. Chu, M. (2017). This Stanford experiment shows the horrible effects of sleep deprivation. Inc. magazine. From: <https://tinyurl.com/d7r66pds>
2. Huang, T., et al. (2019). Cross-sectional and prospective associations of actigraphy-assessed sleep regularity with metabolic abnormalities: The Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis. *Diabetes Care*, 42(8): 1422-1429. From: <https://tinyurl.com/2b6sryzd>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Short sleep duration among U.S. adults. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. From: <https://tinyurl.com/44mz9yet>
4. Fernandez-Mendoza, J., et al. (2019). Interplay of objective sleep duration and cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases on cause-specific mortality. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 8:(20). From: <https://tinyurl.com/73sfzk>



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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to help you sleep 7 to 8 hours a night.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to build better sleep habits and make it a regular part of your life.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

| MONTH: | | | | | | | HC = Health Challenge™ | ex. min. = exercise minutes |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | Weight & weekly summary | |
| HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | HC [] ex. min. _____ | | |
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_____ Number of days this month I practiced positive sleep habits

_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____