



Sleep Better, Work Better

For many of us, getting enough sleep each and every day is, unfortunately, rare. When we lose sleep one or two days in a row without catching up on those missed hours, we fall into a sleep debt. Sleep debt makes us fatigued, and fatigue is much more than feeling tired; it is an impairment that can put you and your co-workers at risk.

Researchers say you need seven to nine hours of restful sleep every day, but according to a National Safety Council survey, 43% of working adults admit to sleeping less than seven hours a day. As a result, our workforce is increasingly fatigued, with one in four workers saying they have fallen asleep on the job in the past month. Often, people do not realize they are fatigued until they are nodding off, but impairment can occur much earlier. By the time you realize how tired you are, you could be dangerously impaired.

This makes fatigue a safety issue both inside and outside the workplace. Without proper sleep at home, you cannot give your best performance at work. Consequently, approximately 13% of work injuries could be attributed to sleep problems. You must learn to recognize your level of fatigue and take steps to improve it.

Get Better Sleep

Just because you are in bed for seven to nine hours does not mean you are necessarily getting the sleep you need. Your bedroom should be designed with sleep in mind, and you should leave any habits that might keep you awake in the other rooms of your home.

Harmful to sleep:

- Staring at phones, TVs, tablets, and other screens
- Lying awake in bed for too long
- Uncomfortable bedroom temperatures
- Distracting lights and sounds

Helpful to sleep:

- Establishing a bedtime routine and/or communicating with your family the importance of your sleep schedule
- Going to sleep and waking at the same times each day, if possible
- Getting up when you need to, not repeatedly hitting snooze

Stick With It

Once you get into a positive sleep schedule, stick to it and be sure to prioritize your sleep going forward. If there is a TV show you like to watch, for example, but it airs after you plan to go to sleep, consider recording it or catching up on it the next day during your downtime. Simple solutions like this can help you sleep better without sacrificing the

things you enjoy. Don't give up on improving your sleep habits just because you hit a roadblock. If you aren't making enough progress, consider talking to a medical professional to find out if something else is hampering your sleep. Seventy million Americans suffer from a sleep disorder, but the right treatment can help.

Accept No Substitutions for Good Sleep

There is no substitute for good sleep. Though many of us use coffee or energy drinks to get an extra boost after waking, they cannot replace crucial hours of sleep. The same goes for our days off; don't miss sleep now because you plan to sleep in over the weekend.

Some employees, including shift workers, may be at higher risk for fatigue and can especially benefit from a sleep health program. Just don't forget your role in avoiding fatigue, it is still up to you to put these habits into practice and make your sleep a priority each day, every day.

Take It Home

Now that you are more familiar with fatigue risks, think about what you can do to help get better sleep. Use the tips above to make bedrooms more conducive to sleep and to help create a family routine so everyone gets ready for bed at the right time.



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