

“The best of all medicines are resting and fasting.”

Benjamin Franklin

Adequate Rest.

There is no doubt about it; sleep and rest are two essentials of a healthy lifestyle. Sleep can be put off for awhile, however, it is so important that it simply will take over when it is needed. When the amount of external stimuli is reduced such as in driving, any driver who has driven after they should have pulled over can tell you how difficult it is to stay awake.

The purpose of sleep is to give the body time to recharge and rejuvenate itself, repair and rebuild the cells, and to detoxify and depress physiological functions. Many people use the terms sleep and rest interchangeably. Not so. While both are important to the body. The state of sleep exists only after consciousness has ceased. Rest is a period of inactivity to help in restoring energy reserves. Essentially, rest is the ceasing of energy expenditures, which allows the body an opportunity to restore energy levels.

Early to bed, early to rise. . .

Most of us are aware of circadian cycles. “Circadian” means “around the day.” Circadian cycles are the rhythmic cycles that occur as different organs seem to have different hours in which they are most active. These cycles play a major part in the appropriate application of acupuncture. There are literally thousands of articles confirming their role.

The importance of these cycles reaffirm the importance of the old saying “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.” Every hour of sleep received before midnight is equivalent to two hours of sleep after. Therefore it is important to get to bed as early after dark as possible. Most people do better if they have at least seven hours of sleep per night.

The greatest single contributor to sound sleep, which in turn sound sleep contributes to, is general good health. Lack of sleep has been associated with a number of chronic health problems. Recent research has made definitive links between lack of sleep and increased incidence of depression, accelerated aging and depressed natural killer cells to name a few.

Occasionally, it may not be possible to get a full night’s sleep. It may have been a particularly stressful day, or some recurring thought or disturbing event may prevent you from obtaining adequate sleep. Instead of the use of extra stimulants such as sweets or coffee to pick you up, try putting your head back in a comfortable position and closing your eyes. You will be amazed at how rejuvenating this can be. If the opportunity is there for a nap, try it. The body’s biological need for sleep is more important than a temporary loss of productivity.

Some tips for a better night’s sleep.

1. Find a bed that is comfortable for you! It is impossible to recommend a specific bed that would be good for everyone is impossible. If you do sleep on a waterbed disconnect the heater at night to reduce your EMF exposure
2. Get to bed as close after dark as is comfortable and possible.
3. Try vigorous exercise at least four times a week five to six hours before bed.
4. Avoid bedtime snacks, especially refined carbohydrates and grains. These tend to raise blood sugar which will inhibit sleep and then later cause a drop in blood sugar which causes hunger and wakefulness.
5. Try to sleep in as close to total darkness as possible. Light will alter circadian cycles affecting melatonin and serotonin production.

6. Try to keep the temperature of bedroom at 70 degrees or slightly below for a more restful (and energy saving) sleep. Wear socks to bed if you get cold.
7. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and any unnecessary drugs as well as foods to which you may be sensitive.
8. Read something spiritual or religious, which will relax but not stimulate your mind.
9. Getting adequate sunshine during the morning hours will help to normalize circadian cycles and improve melatonin production and thus sleep.