



FAMILY FITNESS ASSOCIATION

Family Fitness Association Sleep Summary Sheet

Why Does Sleep Escape and Elude Us?

We spend one third of our lives asleep, so why does sleep elude us? Because of:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Being over-scheduled | g. Sleep Disorders |
| b. Being over-worked | h. Medical Conditions |
| c. Being over-committed | i. Medication Side Effects |
| d. Pride | j. Poor Sleep Hygiene |
| e. Physical Conditions | k. STRESS! |
| f. Stimulants | |

Good news, we have the ability to adjust and reset many of these causes. Think about this list, and decide where you think you could make some positive adjustments.

- **Lack of Sleep Disrupts Everything!**

Lack of sleep disrupts every physiological function in the body (physical performance, cognitive abilities, hunger, mood, etc.). To make matters worse, lack of sleep hinders your ability to realize that your performance is impaired, making you think you are functioning well, when in reality, you are likely not.

- **Warning Signs**

There are some warning signs of sleep deprivation. Have you ever experienced any of the following?

- | | |
|---|--|
| o Overwhelming tiredness;
exhaustion | o Low stress tolerance |
| o Clumsiness | o Poor concentration and ability to
focus |
| o Communication difficulties | o Poor decision making; judgement |
| o Hunger that is difficult to satisfy | o Poor problem solving; reasoning |
| o Easily triggered and intense
emotions; irritable | o Falling asleep in less than 5 minutes |

- **Sleep and Our Commitment to Work Safety**

At XYZ Company, we are committed to working safely and living well. When we joined this company, it is the commitment we made.

Consider how your personal sleep habits are affecting your work performance, and potentially the safety of yourself and fellow team members. What is one aspect of your sleep habits you can focus on tonight, to make some improvement?

- **Sleep Improves Health and Strengthens Immune Systems**

Adequate and quality sleep can improve your overall health. It lowers your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, cancers, stroke, diabetes, bone loss and depression.

You will also benefit from a stronger immune system.

- **Restored Energy Levels and Less Chronic Pain**

Adequate and quality sleep can restore energy levels. During our sleep cycles, our body repairs cell damage, promotes muscle and tissue growth, and help reduce chronic pain.

- **Being Rested Lowers Your Risk of Injury**

Adequate and quality sleep can lower risk of injury, decreasing the likelihood of accidents while operating equipment and driving.

XYZ Company's commitment to Work Safety, and to look out for one another, reinforces the need for all team members to report to work rested and fit for duty.

- **Better Mood/ Better Memory/ Clearer Thinking**

Adequate and quality sleep can improve your mood, memory and can help you to think clearer. Not getting enough sleep affects your ability to regulate emotion. People who are sleep deprived are substantially worse at problem solving. Sleep helps process your learning and memories from the day.

Without enough sleep, those memories might not get stored correctly and can be lost.

- **Adequate Sleep Helps You Control Your Weight**

Lack of sleep has a direct link to increased cortisol levels (stress hormone) and increased belly fat.

Short-term sleep deprivation increases concentration of ghrelin (hormone related to increased appetite) and decreases concentration of leptin (hormone associated to satiety – feeling full), which results in cravings for dense, high calorie, high sugar, high fat, high sodium foods to satisfy the brain.

- **Sleep Strategy: Stick to a Schedule and Create Bedtime Rituals**

Prepare yourself for a good night's sleep by following a schedule. Have a consistent bedtime, and a consistent wake schedule, every day of the week, including weekends.

Go to bed when you are tired, avoid late-day napping and skip the snooze button.

- **Sleep Strategy: Create Bedtime Rituals that Help you Decompress**

Create pre-sleep rituals to cue the body that it is time for sleep. These rituals can help you decompress and de-stress prior to sleep, and may include a hot shower, meditating, reading a book, listening to soothing music.

Avoid all electronics (TV, computers and phones). Exercise is also a great way to decompress before sleep.

But, try to complete all exercise at least two hours prior to sleep.

- **Sleep Strategy: Avoid Stimulants**

Avoid stimulants prior to bedtime. This includes alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, late night exercise and late night eating and drinking. Alcohol is the most common sleep aid that many people rely on for help falling asleep.

The truth is, drinking regularly—even moderate drinking—is much more likely to interfere with your sleep than to assist it.

In the body, alcohol disrupts circadian functioning, directly interfering with the ability of the master biological clock to synchronize itself. Because circadian rhythms have such a powerful, dominating influence over the way our bodies function, the disruptive effects of alcohol can be widespread, affecting sleep and other bodily systems.

- **Sleep Strategy: Disconnect from Work**

These days, cell phones, text messages, laptops, push notifications and emails seem to follow you wherever you go, making it even harder to disconnect from it all at the end of the day.

When you are at work, work. When you are away from work, disconnect and reconnect with the other important aspects of your life: friends, family, hobbies, healthy activities (sleep, exercise, cooking), etc.

When the lines between work and personal life are blurry, both aspects suffer in their productivity, because you never have the opportunity to fully disconnect, recharge and come back focused.

Checking your email “one last time” before you climb into bed will only ensure you carry that stress and anxiety into your sleep.

- **Sleep Strategy: Disconnect from Your Electronics**

Watching television and scrolling through your phone and computer right before bedtime can ruin your sleep. It is recommended that you shut down electronics at least 30 minutes prior to bedtime, with 2-3 hours being reported as more ideal.

The blue wavelengths associated with our devices disrupts the signal to the brain that indicates that it is bedtime. These wavelengths are most beneficial during daylight because they boost attention, reaction times and mood. Exposure to light disrupts our circadian rhythms.

Consider using dim red lights for night lights. Red light has the least power to shift circadian rhythm and suppress melatonin. If you work a night shift, consider using blue blocking glasses or installing an app that filters the blue/green wave-length at night.

- **Sleep Strategy for Falling Asleep and Staying Asleep**

Do you ever have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep? Review your bedtime rituals, and see if there are areas you can improve on to prepare your body and mind to wind down at night. If you find yourself lying in bed restless after 15-20 minutes, try something different.

Get out of bed and do some light activity such as washing dishes, folding laundry, reading, writing, etc. Avoid turning on any electronics, as this will only prolong your awake time. If you find you are battling stressful thoughts, try to quiet your concerns with some meditation or use a notebook to write down your thoughts.

Keep a journal by the bedside, and when a thought enters your head, write it down and then roll back over. The act of writing it down and letting it go will help you move on from those thoughts.

- **Set the Stage: What Does Your Bedroom and Bed Look Like?**

Have you ever stayed in a fancy hotel? What did it look like? Comfortable bed, lush sheets, fluffy pillows and comforter, new mattress, dark curtains, soft lighting, cool temperature, decorated classy and spacious room.

You want your bedroom to feel like a nightly retreat, a sanctuary – a place that is peaceful and comfortable and free of clutter, children and electronics. Take a moment this evening to evaluate your sleeping space, and note what you can do to make it become your nightly retreat space.

Small changes can make a difference: adding black out curtains, cleaning up clutter, new set of sheets or pillow, aromatherapy and less invasive lighting.

- **Sleep Strategy: De-clutter Your Space**

Your bed and bedroom should be a sanctuary where you are able to rejuvenate your mind, body and spirit. A cluttered room will weigh on you consciously or unconsciously, and prevent you from fully recharging overnight. Clutter will bombard your mind with excessive stimuli, causing your senses to work overtime, making it more difficult to relax, physically and mentally.

Clutter creates feelings of guilt and frustration, makes us anxious and inhibits creativity and productivity by taking up space in our head. While you may feel acclimated to the mess, your brain actually interprets it as a chore that needs to be tackled, which makes it jumpy.

We might ignore the clutter on a conscious level because it has been there for so long, but on an unconscious level, the brain wants to complete the task. Out of sight does not mean out of mind.

Tonight, clean up one area of your bedroom and then tomorrow another until you find yourself clutter free. Your bedroom is designed for only two things: sleep and intimacy, not storing excess stuff.

- **Sleep Strategy: Minimize the Sleep Interrupters**

Having the people and pets you love near you when it is time for sleep can be comforting for some, but disruptive for others. For example, cuddling in bed with a partner can be intimate and comforting... until it's not.

You may get along with your partner in every way, but if he or she and you have incompatible sleep habits, you will soon both be suffering from a lack of sleep.

There are many aspects of sleeping with another person that can disrupt sleep — snoring, mismatched sleep schedules, movement during sleep or getting up in the night, and conflicting preferences about things like room temperature and mattress firmness.

If you are a parent of young children, you may keep an open door policy and find small visitors in your room throughout the night, or even wake up with an extra body in your bed. As best as possible, encourage children to sleep in their own beds for their safety and independence.

If you have a pet you share your bed with, there may be some benefits of sharing it with your loyal companion.

In fact, one recent study about pets and sleep quality found that more than 40 percent of survey respondents felt that pets did not negatively impact their sleep, and that they actually benefited from having pets nearby.

However, 20 percent of respondents reported that pets in the bedroom did negatively impact their sleep. If you sleep just fine with your pet in your bed, then keep doing it, but if their presence creates disruptions in your sleep, then consider removing them from the space.

Let's Take Action – Evaluate Your Sleep Routine

Based on the tips you are now aware of, what can you do TODAY to improve your sleep TONIGHT? For example, take a few minutes to evaluate your sleep routine. Does your bedroom need a makeover? Can you add 15 more minutes of sleep a day? Shut off the TV and phone at least 30 minutes prior to bed? Kick the dog out the bedroom? Grab a notebook to record your thoughts late at night and then get back to bed!

