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Burning The Candle At Both Ends Won't Help Your Game

By Dr. Lynn McIntosh

Working twenty-four hours a day may be the way to succeed in business, but it will not lower your handicap. Adequate rest is vital to peak performance. Recent studies have backed this theory, and given us an in-depth look at exactly what lack of sleep can do to your ability to perform.



We can all identify common symptoms related to lack of sleep: depression, weight gain, low sex drive, irritability, diminished brain and immune function, and impaired muscle and aerobic performance. However, a closer look into our bodies also reveals interferences with glucose metabolism and decreases in testosterone.

Test results indicate that after being deprived of sleep, men's bodies metabolized glucose less efficiently, which means lower energy stores in muscles. Lower energy stores mean less strength and increased muscle fatigue. Lower levels of testosterone were also observed, which can add to the overall level of fatigue and reduced muscle performance.

Long Term Physical Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Most of us do not push sleep deprivation to the point of exhaustion, where we would expect to suffer from symptoms more severe than fatigue. However, in relying on a system of banking sleep to make up for frequent short nights we can be creating a long term pattern of sleep deprivation, which can lead to serious health issues.


Consistent interferences in glucose metabolism caused by sleep deprivation can lead to, and increase the severity of, diabetes. Adverse effects on metabolism can lead to obesity, and obesity-related problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and sleep apnea.

The studies on this subject emphasize the importance of getting a full night's sleep every night. Eight hours is recommended for ultimate health and well being.

A Few Suggestions for Getting More Sleep

- Allow enough time to sleep, usually about eight hours.
- Sleep in the same room and bed every night, or at least try to follow a similar routine each evening to help insure a full and restful night's sleep.
- Keep the bedroom free of noise and disruptions like phones and TV.
- Turn your clock so you can't see it. Watching the clock can keep you awake.
- Don't eat, drink alcohol or smoke for two or three hours before you go to bed.
- Get some exercise earlier in the day.
- If you wake up during the night, avoid bright lights. Have a low wattage light in the bedroom and bathroom, so that if you need to turn the light on it will not shock your senses.
- If you find it difficult to fall asleep, or sleep through the night, try a visit to your chiropractor. An adjustment at the end of a stressful day can release anti-stress hormones that help you relax and get to sleep. Your chiropractor can also suggest dietary supplements like melatonin to help regulate your sleep patterns.

A good night's sleep tonight will pay off tomorrow at tee time.

Dr. McIntosh is a board certified Chiropractor, licensed in both Kansas and Missouri. In addition to being licensed to provide general chiropractic care, Dr. McIntosh is a Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician, working with athletes from multiple disciplines on specific sports-related problems. 

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