

PROPER REST: The 5th Law of Health

What are some of the influential factors that affect my Proper Rest?

The seasons, our daily routine, and activities, including (but not limited to) our work and thought patterns, have a lot to do with how we rest. Even our eating habits play a bigger role than we think. Who would've thought that eating locally-grown food, in season, and at the right time of day could in fact help our rest to be more sweet, and our sleep even deeper?

What's the difference between Rest and Sleep?

Sleep is the condition where consciousness has ceased. Rest is a period of inactivity where the body regroups expended energy, ceasing all outlets that expend energy; therefore, allowing the body to redirect its focus to restoration. But first, we must better understand the different forms that rest comes in.

What are the different kinds of Rest?

1. Physical : when we just sit or lay down for a bit to relax.
2. Mental : detach the mind from any/all intellectual activity.
3. Sensory : closing our eyes in quietude ("seeing," surprisingly, expends a lot more energy than we think).
4. Emotional : withdrawal from the interaction with the ups and downs of life.

So, what's the purpose of sleep?

1. Soothes and rests muscles, nerves, and brain (the best natural rejuvenators).
2. Regenerates, repairs, and prepares the body for new activity.
3. Tops up Vitality (nerve energy); which is, the spark of life!

Well, what happens when we sleep? How can the body "rest" if it's "working?"

Repairing cells, healing tissues and organs, making new cells, replenishing cells with fuel, eliminating waste to their proper channels; muscles tense while your pulse rate, blood pressure, and body temperature rise and fall is all the body has to do without any (conscious) thought or effort from you. Therefore, only *part* of the brain is asleep, while the nervous system carries on all those functions, providing the brain with the most vital

source for the regeneration of its nerve energy. This process serves approximately 75-100 trillion cells entirely governed by and connected to the brain under the influence of consciousness.

Why is there danger in sleeping immediately after eating?

The body uses its energy reserves to carry out repair and regeneration tasks at the end of your day. But when you eat, it has to use up that reserved energy to digest (breakdown, absorb, assimilate, and eliminate) food all night long. So when you think you are sleeping, you're body is actually still working overtime, overloaded with the burdensome tasks associated with the digestive process.

How much rest and/or sleep do we need?

One rule says it all: sleep when you're sleepy. Different conditions require different amounts of sleep to recuperate the energy the body needs and that it just used up. Here is my feeling about this whole subject, The longer we are awake, the more energy we use up and the less we sleep, the less energy we produce/generate!

General Observations Regarding Sleep

- The more comfortable the body is physically in bed, the more favorable to a deeper the phase of sleep.
- The better the blood circulates, the more apt you are to get a good nights' sleep; and then the greater restorative, regenerative and eliminative powers take over!
- The better ventilation in the room where we sleep, the sounder the sleep.
- The ideal temperature of the air we breathe throughout the night should be from 65 – 70 degrees.
- Those who eat excessive cooked foods and animal products always require more sleep, as they have more poisons to eliminate from their bodies.
- Don't drink before going to bed. It wears on your kidneys and eliminative organs more than it needs.
- The last meal of the day should be about 4-5 hours before retiring to bed.
- Light interferes with sleep.
- Foul odors disturb sleep. Pleasant smells in the room, from open windows, really add to a deep sleep.

- Comfortable mattresses are best. Not hard surfaces. If that was so then why don't we just sleep on concrete slabs? We need to have a comfortable mattress.

What is the best bedding to use?

White linens are best and are the most porous of all cloth. But they're also very expensive, so the next best is white cotton. At all times the best fiber next to your body should be cotton. It breathes very well because of its porous properties and absorbent ability. It also has a great heat retention capacity. Outdoor sleepers in cooler climates can use wool blankets, but should have some cotton pajamas or underwear next to the skin.

What about the pillows?

There are several good pillows out there. But considering we spend one third of our lives in bed, I want the best. Goose down pillows are very good with a cotton covering; then, of course, a cotton pillowcase over. The main reason for a pillow is to keep your head comfortably elevated to allow air to circulate under your head.

And, the mattress?

Obviously, the mattress has a lot to do with the quality of your sleep. We know that the ideal sleeping conditions are in a relatively weightless condition. But the real thing to be concerned about selecting a mattress is for maximum comfort and maximum circulation. An ultra soft innerspring mattress with cotton padding would be ideal for air to circulate through the mattress onto our bodies, providing oxygen and removing wastes more efficiently. For this, hammocks are terrific!

Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

1. Sleep only as much as you need, so you will feel refreshed the following day.
2. Get up at the same time each day, seven days a week. Regular wake up times lead to regular sleepy times.
3. Add exercise to your daily schedule, It can deepen your sleep.
4. Insulate your room against sound and light.
5. Keep your room temperature moderate. Excessively warm or cold temperatures can disturb sleep.
6. Avoid caffeinated beverages (tea, coffee, and colas) in the evenings.
7. Do not get angry or frustrated because you cannot sleep. Get out of bed, go to a different room, and do something different until your mind is settled and your body becomes tired and sleepy again.
8. If you find yourself looking at the clock at night, turn it so you cannot see it — or cover it up.

Okay, that covers sleep. What about naps?

The best, most refreshing time to doze is mid-afternoon. That's when our circadian rhythms — neural timekeepers in the brain — normally dip and leave us drowsy. And a short nap sometime between 1 and 4 P.M. is least likely to keep us from sleeping that night. "Fifteen to 20 minutes is enough," says Dr. Maas. "We shouldn't nap longer than 30 minutes, or we go into deep sleep and feel groggy upon rising." Studies also show that we benefit from an afternoon nap when we're going to be up very late at night. Taking a short snooze 6-8 hours *before* your normal bedtime can minimize sleepiness and impaired reflexes the next day.

It is important to keep a regular sleep schedule, even on days off and weekends. However, if you can't get enough sleep or feel drowsy, naps as short as 20 minutes can be helpful. Naps can maintain or improve alertness, performance, and mood. Some people feel groggy or more sleepy after a nap. These feelings usually go away within 1-15 minutes, while the *benefits* of the nap may last for many hours. The evening or night worker can take a nap to be refreshed before work.

Studies show that napping at the workplace is especially effective for workers who need to maintain a high degree of alertness, attention to detail, and who must make quick decisions. In situations where the worker is working double shifts or 24-hour shifts, naps at the workplace are even more important and useful.