

# Stop Sleeping Too Much

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Your body must have sleep in order to function well. Without the proper amount of sleep, the effects will show up in your muscles, tissues and organs. Knowing how much it helps your body, you'd think that getting more sleep is a good thing.

But like anything you do, there's only so much of a good thing that your body can handle. Getting too much sleep can be just as bad for you as getting too little sleep.

## **Sleeping Too Much Affects Your Health**

Medical studies have documented the effects of sleeping too much and the risks are serious. One of the ways that getting more sleep than your body needs affects your health is by causing problems with your heart.

If you get more than seven hours of sleep at night, you significantly raise your risk of developing some type of cardiovascular disease. Oversleeping also raises your risk of developing high blood pressure.

In fact, getting over seven hours of sleep at night can cut years off of your life expectancy. Your heart isn't the only thing that can be affected by how much sleep you get.

The longer you sleep, the more at risk you are of developing diseases that can affect your entire body. One of these diseases is diabetes. The more sleep you get - nine or more hours a night - the greater your risk is of getting this disease.

Another side effect of oversleeping is obesity. Those who get too much sleep have almost a 1 in 4 chance of gaining weight to the point that it reaches obesity. When you get too much sleep, rather than feel rested, it has the opposite effect.

You can actually feel more fatigued the longer you sleep. When you overdo it with sleep, your brain will experience a sense of grogginess. You'll feel sluggish in the morning when you wake up.

This feeling that makes you feel as if you're a beat behind has a medical term - and it's called sleep drunkenness. You can experience some of the same side effects as if you had a hangover from drinking too much alcohol.

In this state, those who experience it can find that they struggle to reach full alertness. They'll often feel disoriented and can have impaired cognitive as well as poor motor skills.

You would think that getting plenty of sleep would make your body feel good, but the exact opposite is true. You can actually end up feeling worse than if you'd slept for a lesser amount of time.

Oversleeping can also be a major contributor to headaches. These can lead to rebound headaches, too. Someone wakes with a headache, not realizing that the headache is from oversleeping, goes back to sleep and his or her headache worsens.

Pain in various areas of the body is also common when you get too much sleep. Shoulder pain and lower back pain seem to be the two most often affected areas. When you oversleep, you can cause your muscles to develop muscle fatigue.

Mood disorders - including depression - can be linked to getting more than seven hours of sleep a night. In people who already have depression, getting more sleep than is healthy can actually make the depression worse.

Your brain function is affected with oversleeping. When you get too much shut-eye, not only can your brain's memory become affected but so can your entire cognitive function.

More than any health issue, however, when you sleep too much, you put yourself at a high risk of dying younger than you would if you got the right amount of sleep.

Medical studies have shown that people who sleep nine hours or more increase their chances of dying younger by as much as 50% over those who get a healthier amount of sleep.

### **Your Sleep Schedule Matters**

Many people don't give a lot of thought to their sleep schedule. They simply figure that if they lose sleep one day, they'll just make up for it later. You can't bank sleep or make up for it.

Yet, many people try this. When you have a lack of sleep during your work week and then try to make up for it on the weekends, you raise your chances of developing sleep related health problems.

Sleep isn't something that can be stored in your body and when you miss out on it, you feel the effects of that deficiency. On the other hand, people also don't give much thought to oversleeping.

Most people are under the mistaken belief that getting extended sleep offers a lot of benefits. But just like not getting enough asleep, it takes a toll on the body. When you oversleep, you have more of it than your body can effectively use.

So when you try to fix the issue of not getting enough sleep by getting too much sleep (like on the weekends), you're actually doing more damage to your body than you are good.

It's always better to keep the same sleep habits seven days a week rather than try to change them up. It can lead to problems. Your age also comes into play when it comes to scheduling the right amount of sleep for your body.

The younger you are, the more sleep that you'll need. While it's true that infants and younger children do require more sleep, there's a good reason for this need. Their bodies and brains are still growing and their bodies use sleep as a means to help their mental and physical growth.

This need for longer hours of sleep isn't true for adults because the majority of their growing has already happened. In fact, by the time that you reach the age of 18, you shouldn't sleep more than seven hours a day regardless of your workload, class schedule or how physical you are.

### **The Boomerang Effect of Sleeping Too Much**

There are many reasons that cause people to sleep too much. One of these reasons is insomnia. Insomnia can be short term or long term. It can be episodic - such as the kind of insomnia that comes from an emotional upheaval like a job loss, a relationship ending or a death in the family.

Insomnia can be caused by health problems, emotional problems, substance abuse, poor sleep habits and as a side effect of certain medications. Dwelling on problems when you're trying to go to sleep can cause insomnia.

During the day, your mind is kept occupied by things you have to deal with. But at night, when you're lying in bed, your mind has a chance to think about the things that you kept at bay.

This can be business things, relationship or health issues and anxieties or worry about the future. Sharing a bed with someone who's a restless sleeper or with someone who snores can cause you to develop insomnia.

Being hungry can cause insomnia. So, can being too hot or too cold - or if your room is too bright or too dark. If your mattress is uncomfortable, that can cause insomnia.

So, can taking a nap during the day if you're tired. If you have a job schedule where you have to work swing shifts, that can lead to insomnia. Caffeine can cause you to develop insomnia because it's a stimulant and it prods your brain into alertness.

Using nicotine can also lead to insomnia and so can eating too much right before you plan to go to sleep. But regardless of the reason that's causing your insomnia whenever you do lose sleep, you end up feeling drained and exhausted.

Because of this, what people try to do is to fix the problem so that they get the sleep they need. But in so many cases, the cure ends up becoming part of the problem.

Struggling with insomnia - especially if it's an ongoing problem - can lead people to begin taking medication in order to help them get some sleep. They'll end up either taking over the counter medications or they'll ask their doctor for a prescription.

But the downside to this approach is that whenever you take medication to help you deal with insomnia, you end up sleeping too much. So then what happens is a boomerang effect.

The insomnia led to medicine, which led to sleeping too much, which leads back to insomnia. Since it's not good to stay on any kind of sleep aid for a long period of time, it's always best to get to the root of whatever it is that's causing you to have insomnia and deal with it.

### **The Cure for Sleeping Too Much**

You might think that the cure for oversleeping is simple. Just don't sleep too much. But in many cases, it's not as simple to fix the problem as that. You have to first figure out the reason that you're sleeping too much.

Because sometimes, that reason can be linked to a health problem or the fact that something's going on emotionally. You can't fix something unless you know what's causing it.

Sometimes, people choose to sleep over dealing with issues that they don't want to deal with. Oversleeping allows them to push away whatever is going on and avoid it.

But sleeping doesn't make the issue go away, the person continues to oversleep to escape the problem. So the first step is to deal with the root cause of the oversleeping.

The second step is to come up with a positive reason as to why you want to change your sleep habit. Being motivated to stop oversleeping can make it easier to change.

Associate it with something positive - something that you would enjoy doing. For example, if you enjoy riding a bike or visiting a museum, you could tell yourself that you'll get to do the things you love if you change your sleeping habit.

Third, it can be hard to get out of bed when you talk yourself into staying in it. Plenty of people do this. They'll think things like they hate getting up or they've worked hard and deserve to sleep in. Change your mindset.

Finally, if you do have a habit of oversleeping, going cold turkey and thinking that you're going to magically change your entire routine overnight could be setting yourself up for failure.

When you make a big change in your sleep schedule, you're going to feel the impact. You're going to be tired and probably grumpy. It will be too easy to fall back into the habit of oversleeping.

What you can do is gradually reduce the amount of time that you spend sleeping. Back up your sleep habit in increments. Instead of suddenly cutting two hours off your sleep time, cut ten minutes.

Do this a few days at a time during the week. By cutting back on your sleep gradually, you give your body time to adjust so that losing the sleep you once had isn't as difficult.

### **Get the Right Amount of Sleep to Prevent Oversleeping**

If you want to get the right amount of sleep, you want to make it easy on yourself for this to happen. If you're like most people, you probably hate the sound of an alarm clock blaring to get you out of bed.

But using an alarm clock can help prevent oversleeping. This will help you set a schedule that you can keep to seven days a week. It will make it easier for you to get up and easier for you to get to sleep at night as well.

You should aim to try to rise at the same time every day and get to bed at the same time. Being consistent gets your body on a routine by changing your body's internal clock.

Don't put the alarm clock right beside your bed. It's too easy to hit the snooze button and end up oversleeping. Instead, put it where you have to get out of the bed to go shut it off.

Never crawl back in bed after you've shut off the alarm. Your brain still isn't quite awake yet and you'll find it easy to fall back asleep. Make sure that your bedtime routine is as relaxing as you can possibly make it.

If you have something that you have to deal with - whether it's physical or mental, make sure that you're not dealing with it close to your bedtime. Use natural methods to help you relax at night.

One of these methods is guided imagery. This can help you decompress and allow your muscles to relax. Try deep, slow breathing techniques to help you fall asleep.

You can also listen to soothing music such as nature sounds. The crashing of ocean waves and rain falling can be an especially helpful relaxation practice. Keep your focus on something that will help you sleep.

What some people do is to start counting backward from a certain number. This keeps the mind on something that's repetitive - and repetition can help cause drowsiness.

Don't let yourself go from one extreme to the other - from oversleeping to the point it affects your health to a state of insomnia, where you're equally sabotaged with your mental and physical well-being. Try to find the right balance.



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