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Eat Right, Work Out, Sleep Better

By ARA Content

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by: **ARA Content**

The Three Components of a Healthy Lifestyle

(ARA) – In today's fast-paced world, moving at full speed isn't an option, it's a way of life. Finding the energy to keep up has led many Americans to improve their diets and increase their activity and exercise. Yet many people are missing the third vital component to a healthy lifestyle — a good night's sleep.

"Committing to improving overall health requires ambition, focus and knowledge," says women's health researcher Joan Shaver, Ph.D., RN, professor and dean of the College of Nursing at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "We should think of a healthy lifestyle as a triangle, with the three points of proper nutrition, exercise and sleep. If we fail to fulfill any one of these points, we are missing the potential for optimum health."

Good nutrition and exercise

The requirements of eating a balanced diet will vary from individual to individual, but it is vital that all major food groups are included. Many of today's diets may help improve weight loss, but often leave the body begging for vitamins and other essential nutrients. Eating a diet full of fruits, vegetables, breads, and fibers will help to give the body more energy for exercise and taking on the events of a busy day.

"Getting in shape" means exercising at least three days a week for 30 minutes or more — not necessarily all at once. Exercise doesn't have to be boring or rigorous — it can be as simple and fun as a morning walk or an evening bike ride. In fact, yard work is considered a great workout and long summer days allow for plenty of time outside. Since exercise will raise the body's temperature and heart rate, be sure to complete exercise at least three hours before bedtime to allow the mind and body to wind down.

Better sleep

According to Dr. Shaver, several lifestyle factors must be considered to benefit from a better night's sleep. First, evaluate the sleep environment — ensure that your room is cool, dim and quiet. Reserve the bedroom for sleep — avoid bringing work to bed or watching television in the bedroom.

Next, allow enough time for sleep — on average, the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) recommends eight hours for adults. But, in the 2002 NSF "Sleep in America" poll, 39 percent of respondents said they were sleeping less than seven hours at night on weekdays. And most only slept 7.5 hours on the weekends.

Finally, ensure that each sleep partner is comfortable by finding a mattress that meets individual needs. According to the NSF, 91 percent of people say their sleep surface is important in helping them

get a deep, restful night's sleep. And 89 percent of those surveyed in 2002 agree that a better quality mattress provides a better night's sleep.

One alternative to traditional innerspring mattresses is The Sleep Number Bed by Select Comfort. It allows individuals to adjust the bed to their ideal level of personal comfort — their Sleep Number. A Sleep Number is a number between zero and 100 that represents each individual's ideal setting for mattress firmness, comfort and support. With dual-adjustable air chambers, sleep partners can independently adjust the firmness on their side of the Sleep Number bed without disrupting their partner's desired comfort level.

Kevin Garnett, professional basketball player for the Minnesota Timberwolves, has recognized the importance of sleep on his overall performance as a professional athlete and has taken personal sleep comfort to a new level. In 2001, the 6-foot, 11-inch forward ordered a custom-made 9-foot by 9-foot, dual-adjustable Sleep Number bed from Select Comfort.

"The Sleep Number bed has helped me sleep through the night when my muscles ache after a hard workout," says Garnett. "With a regular mattress you have to adjust your body to the bed. The Sleep Number bed allows you to adjust the bed to your body."

In studies conducted at Stanford University and Duke University, participants fell asleep faster and experienced better quality, more restorative sleep on the Sleep Number bed than on a traditional innerspring mattress. Stanford University researchers also found that 87 percent of those who slept on the Sleep Number bed experienced a greater percentage of REM sleep with fewer disturbances. The Sleep Number bed also provides more proper spinal alignment and 93 percent of participants reported back pain relief.

For more information about these or other sleep facts, visit

. To find out more

about the Sleep Number bed, call (800) 535-BEDS.

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; e-mail:

Lose Weight While You Sleep

By Heather Moreno, PeopleFit USA

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Believe it or not, sleep has a great deal to do with how and what you eat and maintaining your weight.

Your body runs according to your biological clock. This clock is difficult if not impossible to change. So, you must create your lifestyle around this internal clock. Most of us structure our sleep around our work, family and home life with less thought to what our bodies need - we're dealing with life. But there is good incentive to make a change.

A lack of sleep can affect your weight in two ways:

1. People who lack sleep are more likely to overeat. Your ability to be in tune to hunger is diminished and research shows that sleep-deprived people tend to eat 15% more food than those who get the sleep they need. Many go for high-sugar comfort foods, like cookies and candy, for a quick energy boost. In a sleep-deprived state, the body will store more calories as fat thinking a crisis is near. Ugh!

2. When you get enough sleep you replenish your energy stores and your hormones stay in check. When you are sleep deprived the hormone cortisol rises in your body, indicating stress. When cortisol remains high it stimulates your appetite for high sugar foods and it also causes the body to store more fat in the abdominal area. Lack of sleep can lead to weight gain!

Consider the following:

- *What time do you get up? Go to bed?
- *How many hours of sleep do you average?
- *How many hours of sleep do you need?
- *Based on the hours of sleep you need, what time is ideal for you to go to bed? To get up?

You might notice some changes need to be made. While you may not be able to reach your ideal habits right now, making small changes in sleeping habits can help, especially during the crazy schedules the holidays bring.

Heather Moreno is a CPA escapee who followed her passion for fitness. She is certified by the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Council on Exercise. Heather is president of PeopleFit USA... getting you fit in 20 minutes a week over the phone. If working out isn't working out for you or you've tried your last diet, visit www.peoplefitusa.com. Is your group or company looking for a fitness motivational speaker or corporate fitness program? Ask Heather!

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