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Too Stressed to Snooze?

By ARA Content

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by: **ARA Content**

Solutions for a More Peaceful Night's Sleep

(ARA) – Most Americans do not get the recommended eight hours of sleep required for good health, safety and optimum performance. In fact, the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) recently reported that 63 percent of Americans are sleep deprived.

During stressful times — such as the loss of a loved one, a change in job status or a serious illness — the numbers of those who suffer from sleep deficiency can be even greater. Ironically, this is the time when a good night's sleep is even more important to facilitate recovery and healing.

The following suggestions may ensure a more peaceful and restorative night's sleep for the entire household.

Struggling for Much-Needed Rest

People who suffer from anxiety often have difficulty falling asleep, wake up frequently during the night, arise too early in the morning, or experience unrefreshing sleep. These symptoms of insomnia are fueled by stress, grief, worry and disrupted sleep schedules.

One solution to combating insomnia is to create a restful sleep environment in every bedroom in the house. This includes keeping the temperature cool, the light dim and the bed comfortable.

"Choosing a good mattress can make a difference in the quality of sleep you get at night and the way you feel during the day," said Dr. Gary Zammit from the Sleep Disorders Institute at St. Luke's – Roosevelt Medical Center in New York City. "Most people do not realize that their bed can be preventing them from sleeping well and, in some cases, keeping them awake."

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Insomniacs might consider alternative sleep surfaces to improve their sleep. One alternative is the Sleep Number Bed by Select Comfort with adjustable firmness and individualized comfort levels. 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.

Insomnia can be a forerunner of depression and other health-related problems, so it is important to seek a doctor's advice if symptoms persist.

Recognizing That Your Body Needs Sleep

For many involved in a crisis, daytime sleepiness is a frequent problem. Even if a person is getting the recommended eight hours of sleep a night, stress and emotional fatigue can cause excessive

sleepiness and frequent dozing off. This can be especially harmful for adults since daytime sleepiness can lead to health problems or dangerous situations when they drive.

The best solutions for overcoming daytime sleepiness are to stick to a normal sleep routine and get extra rest if your body needs it. When stressed, adults should pay careful attention to what their bodies are telling them, make good judgments about getting to bed earlier and take frequent naps.

Lack of concentration, nodding off during quiet activities or having trouble waking up in the morning are signs that a child is not getting enough sleep. Parents should remember that if the sleep schedule is disrupted even one night, a child may experience these symptoms.

"Children copy their parents' sleep patterns, so it's important for parents to maintain consistent sleep schedules and get enough sleep at night," says Dr. Zammit. "Getting a good night's sleep should be a family priority, and it starts with the adults in the household."

Soothing Bad Dreams

Nightmares — vivid, long, scary dreams — are more frequent during times of stress, anxiety and helplessness. Children aged 3 to 6 are the most common sufferers of bad dreams, but traumatic events can increase the occurrence of nightmares in adults as well.

To avoid the anxiety nightmares can cause, it is important for adults to monitor the amount of television their family watches before bedtime and discuss any disturbing images with their kids. When children have nightmares, parents should comfort them by talking about the bad dream and offering reassurance that they are available whenever needed.

To reduce the chance of having nightmares, adults should avoid eating directly before bedtime and reduce their intake of caffeine and alcohol, as each will increase brain activity that can disrupt sleep.

For more information about sleeping better during stressful times, visit www.sleepfoundation.org. For

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

Courtesy ARA Content,

; e-mail:

Stress Management Technique

By John Furnem

Stressed out? Nothing seems to be going right? Don't worry; you are among the millions of people worldwide who reportedly are stressed out. This article will help with stress management techniques that will help manage the stress in your life.

Meditation

There is nothing mystical about meditation, its something that can easily be done by following the following steps

- Find a place where you can sit quietly and comfortably.
- Close your eyes
- Start with contracting and relaxing the muscles of your feet, work up your body all the way to your face
- Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe in deeply then let breath out. Count your breaths as you let them out. This will give you something to focus on, Do this technique for 10–20 minutes at a time. It should help to relax you help minimize the impact of stress on you both physically and mentally.

Use Music and Relaxation Tapes

A alternate approach to relaxation is listening to calming music or relaxation or hypnosis tapes. It takes little effort to listen to these tapes and music, and will be very welcome at the end of a long stressful day. You can buy relaxing music and meditation tapes most places. A good source is to look online and get one that you would be interested in. A good site to look at is Relaxation tape music. They have a lot of good resources that will help melt the stress away.

Self Hypnosis

Self hypnosis is when you hypnotize yourself. Often this method is more effective than normal hypnosis as you do it yourself, causing no added stress of meeting with a hypnotist.

- Find somewhere comfortable and quiet to sit down.

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- Relax your body. One way to do this is to imagine waves of imagination running down your body starting from your scalp moving downwards.
- Deep the relaxation. Saying statements like I am feeling relaxed and comfortable. With every breath I am becoming more relaxed and more comfortable. You can use several different statements to become more comfortable and relaxed.

Typical self hypnosis sessions typically last 15 and 25 minutes however, they can last as long as you like.

In conclusion, there are several methods that you can use to relax and help minimize the stress in your life. Use some of these ideas, and in no time you will be less stressed and more ready to tackle the problem of stress in your own life. Good luck!

John Furnem is a dot com veteran, specializing in human resources and work psychology he has written articles and held workshops/seminars for stress relief and stress management. John currently writes articles for

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