

HINTS AND TIPS

Sleep & Weight Management:

If you want to lose
a few pounds, get
some rest!!

As a population we usually focus on nutrition and physical activity when considering implementing a healthy lifestyle, however chronic lack of sleep can have negative consequences on both our physical & mental health. Sleep deprivation also makes weight gain so much more likely. A weight loss journey while not sleeping makes everything that you attempt so much harder.

Aim for 7-9 hours per night of quality sleep. The brain likes routine, so try to go to bed and get up the same time at least 6 days per week.

Lack of sleep increases hunger levels. We all have appetite hormones that tell our brain when we are hungry, or full up. These hormones reset while we are in our deepest sleep (around 2-4am). If this reset doesn't happen due to lack of quality sleep, we are far more likely to overeat or crave high calorie foods the next day.

We are also more likely to feel emotional if our sleep quality is poor. This sometimes means we eat for reasons other than being hungry. How many times have you found yourself standing in front of the fridge when you're stressed or upset, looking for something to sooth your emotions? The brain makes **easy** choices when tired, which may not necessarily be healthy ones.

One of the reasons that we struggle to sleep is that we have too much exposure to light in the evenings and not enough in the day. Melatonin is our sleep hormone. It should be high in the evenings and low in the morning, but exposure to artificial lights sometimes means that it doesn't work as it should.

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By getting natural light onto the skin first thing in the morning can help reset the balance

Limiting screen time from all electronic devices at least 60 mins before bed can promote Melatonin to 'switch on'.

Having a relaxing bedtime routine helps remind the brain to increase melatonin levels, helping you get to sleep *and* stay asleep. (You'd never put a toddler to bed without a sleep routine, so why do we expect to sleep without winding down first?)

Caffeine can also have a massive impact on both getting to sleep and staying asleep. It hangs around for a long time. A coffee, tea or other caffeinated drink consumed mid-afternoon can still be in your system at bedtime. Some people are more sensitive to the effects of caffeine than others, however it may be worth considering limiting caffeine intake from midday onwards. Remember, tea, some sodas and even some herbal teas contain caffeine.

After a bad night's sleep someone is likely to eat 2-300 more calories the following day!

Ta ra for now, *Max* The Health Improvement Coach