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A good night's sleep is vitally important in order to maintain good health. Sleep recharges your body and also restores your mind as well, and it's impossible to live without it. In fact, it's so important that we dedicate up to one third of our lives to the pursuit of sleep. Many people, however, find that getting restful sleep is elusive and sometimes frustrating.

The world we live in today encourages us to be productive 24 hours per day, and this sort of thinking really eats into our rest time. Many of us push to get more things done and sacrifice sleep to do so, thinking we can catch up at some later time. A sleep debt is a very hard one to pay back, however, and studies are showing that healthy sleep is as important as nutrition to your good health. So how do we achieve this elusive night of restful sleep? There are many things we can do to increase our chances for getting the most out of the time we spend in bed sleeping. Read below to find out more about getting the proper rest.

One of the most important things you can do is to make sleep a priority. Experts recommend that we all get between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night. Picking a schedule for sleep and then sticking to it will be extremely helpful. This means going to bed and waking up at the same time whenever possible.

One major contributor to disrupted sleep patterns is shift work. People working an off shift are more likely to suffer from poor sleep habits and from a lack of sleep. If you do shift work, there are a few things you can do to help you sleep better, such as only using products with caffeine towards the beginning of your shift, and sticking to the same shift all the time if possible. Also, when trying to get some rest, remove all distractions such as noise and light from the bedroom. Make the area as dark as possible so your body gets the message that it's time for sleep.

If you're on the regular shift, you can do plenty to help your body get the rest it needs. Avoiding caffeine later in the day is a wise choice, as it can take caffeine up to 8 hours to completely leave your body. Staying away from cigarettes is another good thing to do, not only for your overall general health but to help you sleep better as well. Exercise is a great way to relieve stress and improve your health, but exercising too close to hitting the sack will actually prevent you from falling asleep right away. Exercise will stimulate your body and make it difficult to sleep. Experts recommend that you don't exercise less than three hours before you plan on turning in.

No matter what some people try, they find it difficult to achieve restful sleep. If this is the case, perhaps it's possible that some sort of sleep disorder is the culprit. One of the most common ones is called sleep apnea. Sleep apnea can be difficult to diagnose because it often goes unnoticed by the sufferer, and is most likely to be noticed by a family member or spouse. Other common sleep disorders include insomnia, restless leg syndrome and narcolepsy.

If you've tried all the recommendations for getting a good night of restful sleep but are still feeling sleepy during the daytime, perhaps a talk with your health care professional is the right thing to do. Sleep is vitally important for your good health, and not getting enough rest can lead to all sorts of health problems.

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