

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2006



The Secret to Fitness is in the Bedroom

Sleep is the forgotten factor in good fitness; only 10 per cent of Canadians consider it critical

TORONTO, Ontario – January 8, 2007 – We're all familiar with the standard New Year's resolution of getting more fit. And true to form, according to a new survey by the Better Sleep Council Canada, three quarters (76 per cent) of Canadians say they plan to improve their physical fitness in 2007. But why do so many resolutions fail? In part because Canadians are too tired to recognize one the most important factors in reaching their fitness goals: proper sleep.

The Better Sleep Council Canada study found a mere ten per cent of Canadians think good sleep is critical to fitness, yet nearly one-third (30 per cent) admit that a "lack of energy" is the greatest barrier to improving their fitness. This year, the Better Sleep Council Canada reminds Canadians about the importance of sleep on their overall health.

"Canadians need to get into bed to keep fit," says Dr. Stacy Irvine, Chiropractor and Fitness Expert, on behalf of the Better Sleep Council Canada. "Our bodies repair themselves during deep sleep, so after any kind of physical activity – from running the Boston Marathon to gardening or walking around the block – sleep recovery is just as important as the activity itself."

During sleep Human Growth Hormone, which contains natural anti-aging, growth and repair abilities, is released. Natural immune system modulators also rise while sleeping, helping our bodies fight off the viral infections, colds, flus and respiratory tract infections that slow us down.

Adds Irvine, "Regular exercise releases endorphins that relieve stress, and the physical exertion helps our bodies crave rest for a more deep restful sleep. The benefits of sleep and fitness are reciprocal."

Sleep – the easy answer

When it comes to being physically fit, Canadians are trying various options. According to the study, one-quarter (25 per cent) belong to a gym or health club and half (50 per cent) of Canadians own some kind of fitness or sports apparel, or equipment. But sleep is still the first step to being fit.

"One of the most important pieces of fitness equipment in our homes is actually our bed," says Dr. Irvine. "You can have all the sports equipment and spandex you want, but without a good night's sleep you won't have the energy to exercise and accomplish your goals. What you sleep on affects the quality of both your sleep and recovery from physical activity every night."

Canadians' attitudes toward fitness

- The majority of Canadians (58 per cent) believe regular exercise is critical to overall fitness; 22 per cent say diet, while only 10 per cent say sleep and eight per cent say stress management is key;
- Sixty-four per cent say time is the greatest barrier to improving their fitness; sixteen per cent of Canadians say it is spending the extra money;
- 33 per cent of women say energy is a barrier to better fitness; versus 27 per cent of men
- Homemakers have the least energy for exercise; 44 per cent list this as their greatest barrier to fitness, compared to 30 per cent nationally;

- Those who are most likely to have a gym membership are: Canadians aged 25-34 (38 per cent), employed Canadians (28 per cent), those making over \$100,000 (38 per cent) and those who are single (31 per cent versus 23 per cent of married Canadians)

The Better Sleep Council Canada offers these tips to improve your sleep and fitness:

- A good workout begins the night **before**. Get a proper night's sleep to get the energy you need to exercise to your full potential the next day.
- Normalize your sleep-wake patterns – try going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Avoid taking naps in the afternoon or after exercising. They can interfere with your ability to sleep at night.
- Allow yourself time to wind down: avoid strenuous exercise within three hours of bedtime.
- If your exercise/sport (like late-night hockey) reduces your hours of sleep or throws off your sleeping patterns, make up for that lost time by getting more hours of sleep the next day, or as soon as possible.
- Work around your schedule: if you're an early riser, try doing some physical activity before you start your day.
- Make time for exercise in your busy schedule. Try to incorporate 30 minutes of activity into your personal routine every day, from walking to gardening; increase your fitness level with physical activity such as a gym workout at least three times per week.

It may be time for a new mattress if:

- You wake up with pain, stiffness or soreness (unrelated to a workout!)
- You are not sleeping as well as you were a year ago
- Your lifestyle or body has changed significantly since you bought your mattress
- You had your best night's sleep somewhere other than in your own bed
- Your mattress shows visible signs of wear and tear, including stains, soils, tears or sagging
- Your mattress has outlived its effective comfort life (eight to 10 years)

Guide to Sleep and Fitness

Canadians can visit www.bettersleep.ca for a two-page Sleep and Fitness Guide, along with many other general tips on how to get a better night's sleep.

About the Better Sleep Council Canada

Established in 2002, The Better Sleep Council Canada is committed to educating Canadians about the importance of sleep to good health and quality of life and to promote the value that a better quality mattress and foundation can bring when regularly replaced within the sleep environment. The Better Sleep Council Canada is comprised of over 450 manufacturers, retailers and component suppliers from the mattress industry.

About Dr. Stacy Irvine

Dr. Stacy Irvine is co-founder of Totum Life Science, one of the most successful fitness and health care companies in Canada. Through her work as a chiropractor and strength and conditioning specialist, Dr. Irvine's clientele ranges from beginners, just starting out on an exercise program, to elite and professional athletes, looking for advanced rehabilitation and training program strategies. Dr. Irvine has worked as a sessional lecturer and research assistant at the University of Toronto and the University of Saskatchewan.

About the poll

*The Canadian survey was conducted by Decima Research. Telephone interviews were conducted from December 14 to December 17, 2006. Results from this nation-wide sample of 1,000 Canadians over the age of 18 are considered accurate to within +/- 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Regional results are available.

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