

# A Guide *to* Better Sleep

Consumer Information Series



## 15 GREAT SLEEP STRATEGIES FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

We all have such a busy lifestyle with too much to do, so take the time to recharge your body by getting a good night's sleep. The quality and quantity of the sleep you get can make all the difference in how you are able to function productively the next day. Here are fifteen tips to help you get the sleep you need.

### **SLEEP ON A COMFORTABLE AND SUPPORTIVE MATTRESS AND FOUNDATION.**

It is difficult to sleep on a bed that is too small, too soft, too hard or too old.

**EXERCISE REGULARLY.** Exercise increases heart and lung fitness, reduces stress, anxiety and insomnia. Try not to exercise within three hours of bedtime as the adrenaline released through exercise can keep you awake.

### **KEEP MENTALLY STIMULATED DURING THE DAY.**

Boredom can cause loss of sleep.

**EAT A BALANCED DIET.** Don't eat a large or heavy meal within four or five hours of going to bed. Also, try to avoid any foods that can cause indigestion.

**STOP SMOKING.** Nicotine is a stimulant and makes it harder to fall asleep.

**REDUCE CAFFEINE INTAKE.** Consumption of drinks such as coffee, tea or soft drinks containing caffeine can make it more difficult to fall asleep.

**AVOID ALCOHOL.** Drinking alcohol before bedtime can cause disturbed and shallow sleep.

**TAKE A WARM BATH.** The warm water sends blood away from the brain to the surface of the skin to make you feel relaxed and drowsy.

**CREATE A RELAXING BEDROOM ATMOSPHERE.** Make sure your bedroom is associated with pleasure and rest – not stress and tension.

**ESTABLISH A SLEEP RITUAL.** Doing the same things each night just before going to bed signals your body to settle down for the night.

**AVOID TRYING TOO HARD TO GET TO SLEEP.** The more pressure you put on yourself, the harder it will be to fall asleep.

**UNWIND EARLY IN THE EVENING.** Try to deal with worries and distractions several hours before bedtime.

**KEEP REGULAR HOURS.** Manage your internal clock by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day – even on weekends.

**GET THE TEMPERATURE RIGHT.** As a guide, 16 degrees Celsius is generally conducive to a restful sleep, while temperatures above 24 degrees Celsius are more likely to cause restlessness.

**DRESS FOR THE PART.** For maximum sleep comfort, wear loose fitting nightwear made from natural fabric, such as cotton, wool or silk.



You'd give him anything, just don't give him your old mattress.





## SAFETY INFORMATION

- Remember that fire and mattresses are a bad combination, so keep matches, lighters and other ignitables (i.e. cigarettes and candles) away from your mattress and furniture. Remember that children, mattresses and fire are a bad combination. Keep all matches, lighters and other ignitables out of reach of children.
- Don't store old mattresses in your house – in the garage, basement or attic – because they could pose fire safety hazards.

## WHAT TO DO WITH THE OLD SLEEP SET

Often when you purchase a new sleep set you can make arrangements with the retailer to remove the old mattress set.

Using the old set in a child's room or guest room is not a very good idea. If the mattress and foundation no longer provide optimum comfort and support for you, then chances are the set won't provide the support and comfort needed for your child or guest to get a good night's sleep.

## MATTRESS CARE TIPS

Keep your new sleep set in good condition by following these suggested care guidelines:

- Have the retailer move your new mattress and foundation into your home or ask for advice about properly moving it yourself. Improper handling or installation can damage your new sleep set.
- Some new mattresses should be turned and/or rotated to help smooth out contours and equalize the wear and tear that normally occurs. Not all mattresses need this type of care however so check with your retailer to see what is best for your particular mattress.
- Do not use the handles to carry or support the full weight of the mattress. Typically, the handles are designed to help you position the mattress over the foundation. If used improperly, the handles may pull out of the sides and damage the fabric.
- Vacuuming is the only recommended way to clean a mattress. A quality, washable mattress pad will help keep the sleep set free from stains. If you are determined to tackle a stain, use mild soap with cold water and rub lightly. Don't ever soak a mattress or foundation.
- Twice a year check for signs of wear and tear to see if it might be time to invest in a new mattress set.
- Never put anything between the mattress and foundation to adjust the support. If you feel that you need to do this it is probably time to replace your sleep set.

## MAKE YOUR BEDROOM A RESTFUL PLACE TO SLEEP

There should be no reason to settle for anything less than a perfect sleep. Your bedroom should be quiet and relaxing. Unwelcome noise or light, an uncomfortable or worn-out mattress and foundation, a room that is too warm or too cold can prevent you from getting the comfortable sleep that your body needs.

## MAKE YOUR BEDROOM A HAVEN FOR SLEEP

Is your bedroom conducive to a good night's sleep?

Here are some factors that can make a difference:

- **Mattress and Foundation** Be sure your mattress and foundation meet your needs for both comfort and support. If you sleep with a partner, your mattress should allow both of you enough space to move easily.
- **Light** Light is one of the body's most powerful time cues. The rising sun can wake up the brain long before the alarm goes off. A dark room is the most conducive for sleep – both day or night.
- **Noise** Sudden, loud noises from inside or outside the home can disrupt sleep. However, steady, low sounds, such as the whir of a fan or air conditioner can be soothing because they help block out distracting noises.
- **Temperature** The ideal bedroom temperature is 16 to 18 degrees Celsius (60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit). A room that is too warm or too cool can deter you from getting a comfortable sleep.

## SELECTING THE BEST MATTRESS AND FOUNDATION FOR YOU

Don't look to the warranty to determine whether it is time for a new mattress. The warranty does not indicate how long your mattress will maintain optimum comfort and support. When you are thinking of buying a new mattress you should think of it in the same way that you would when you are buying a new car. You should:

### Test-drive:

Lay down on the mattress – in all different sleeping positions. If you don't sleep alone, make sure you go shopping with your partner and lie down on the bed together.

### Size:

Check that the bed is wide enough to fit you comfortably. Sleep studies show that we turn between forty and sixty times a night and that we require room to move freely so that we don't wake up. Experts recommend that if you sleep with a partner you may want a Queen size or King size mattress.

### Support:

To check if your mattress offers appropriate support, lie on your back and try sliding the flat of your hand under the small of your back. If the mattress is too soft you will have difficulty getting your hand underneath; if it is too hard your hand will move freely beneath you as there will be a space between the mattress and your spine. When your hand fits snugly under the small of your back and the mattress then you know that this will allow your spine to rest in its natural "s" shape.

### Firmness and Comfort:

Mattresses don't have to be hard as a board to be good for you, although some people prefer a firmer sleeping surface. Today mattresses are built with new cushioning materials that offer you a plush feel on top with the core providing you with the necessary support for your body.

### Care:

Improper care throughout the life of your mattress can shorten its life span. See "Mattress Care Tips" for more information.

### Sleep Set Advances

Technological and medical advances, combined with industry research and development, have not only led to changes in mattress design and construction but also to improvements in the comfort and support available in today's mattresses, leading to a better night's sleep.

## THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP

You spend one-third of your life sleeping! This time has a profound effect on the other two-thirds of your life. The amount and quality of sleep you get affects your alertness, energy, mood, body weight, perception, memory, thinking, reaction time, productivity, performance, communication skills, creativity, safety and good health.

### Does sleep have a direct impact on our health?

Most definitely! Sleep plays a large role in the numerous aspects of our health and well-being. That is why consistently getting a good night's sleep is so important.

### Here are a few examples of the health benefits of sleep\*:

- Blood supply to our muscles increases during deep sleep, allowing the body to recover from the physical stresses of the day.
- Body temperature is turned down in deep sleep, thereby conserving energy.
- Metabolic activity is reduced while we sleep, providing an opportunity for tissue growth and repair.
- Natural immune-system modulators increase during sleep, hence modest loss of sleep reduces the body's immune responses and your resistance to viral infection. You may get more colds, flu and respiratory tract infections when you do not get enough sleep.
- Intensive firing of neurons during REM sleep is thought to be responsible for aiding memory storage and retrieval as well as reorganizing and categorizing information.

\* Source: A Woman's Guide to Sleep by Joyce Walsebens, Phd and Rita Baron-Faust page 20-21

### Four R's to a Restful Nights Sleep:

**Regularize** your sleep-wake patterns. Get up at the same time daily. Avoid naps unless they are regular. Try to sleep the same amount of time each night. Find the perfect amount of sleep for you and stick with it.

**Ritualize** cues for good sleep. Keep your environment quiet, dark, cool and safe for sleeping. Go to bed only when you are sleepy.

**Relax.** Find ways to reduce stress and control tension. Learn some relaxation techniques.

**Resist behaviours** that interfere with sleep: keep away from alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. Avoid strenuous exercise within three hours of bedtime. Avoid heavy meals before bed.

For more information on the benefits of sleep and buying a new mattress visit the Better Sleep Council Canada's web site at <http://www.bettersleep.ca>



## RESOURCES FOR HELP WITH SLEEP PROBLEMS

If you think you are suffering from a serious sleep problem, such as insomnia, sleep apnea, narcolepsy or restless legs syndrome, consult your doctor or a sleep specialist.

For general questions and inquiries about sleep and sleep disorders, request consumer information from:

- **Canadian Sleep Society**

Web Site: <http://www.css.to>

- **National Sleep Foundation**

1552 K Street, N.W. Suite 500

Washington, DC 20005 USA

Phone: 202-347-3471

Fax: 202-347-3472

Web Site: <http://www.sleepfoundation.org>

- **National Centre on Sleep Disorders Research**

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

6705 Rockledge Centre Suite 6022

Bethesda, MD 20892-7993 USA

Phone: 301-435-0199

Fax: 301-480-3451

Web Site: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncsdr>

## GOOD SLEEP – AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Like proper nutrition and exercise, sleep is essential to making you feel your best. Adults need between seven and eight hours of sleep a night – individual needs may range from five to ten hours.

Many people underestimate how vital sleep is to maintaining good health and well-being. When you sleep your body begins its job of consolidating the day's learning into memory and improving your ability to absorb and remember everyday skills. A good night's sleep also helps to re-energize your body and to prepare for the day ahead.

If you don't get the sufficient amount of sleep required by your body your daily life can become more stressful and less productive. Therefore, getting a good night's sleep will give you the ability to perform much better when you are awake.

### **Better Sleep Begins With Your Mattress**

Because you can't always get all of the sleep that you need, you should strive to get the most out of the sleep that you do get. An uncomfortable mattress can rob you of precious sleep, causing you to toss and turn thus preventing you from getting the full benefit of your time in bed. Sleeping on a mattress that meets your needs for comfort, support and space can help you sleep better.

## SLEEP DEBT: YOU CAN BANK ON IT

### **What Is Sleep Debt?**

Each of us maintains a personal sleep bank account. Any sleep we get is a deposit to the account; any hours of wakefulness is a withdrawal from the account. Most people need to deposit at least eight hours of sleep into their account to cancel the debt incurred by sixteen hours of continuous alertness.

Some of the ways that can cause you to accumulate a sleep debt are depriving yourself of sleep by missing a night's sleep; staying up late for a few nights in a row; getting woken up several times during the night (due to noises, an uncomfortable mattress, a baby, etc).

You can find clues in your everyday lifestyle to determine if you need to catch up on your sleep – just to name a few - itching or burning eyes; craving unhealthy high-fat and high-carb foods, mood changes, reduced thinking abilities and mental efficiency and poor memory processing. If you are feeling that you are sleep deprived or may have a serious sleep problem, consult your doctor or a sleep specialist.

**A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.** For many Canadians the consequences of a poor night's sleep – higher stress, increased mistakes, and difficulty concentrating – are everyday occurrences. But it doesn't have to be this way. You can improve your chances of getting a good night's sleep.

This booklet will provide you with simple solutions that can help improve the quality of your life by improving the quality of your sleep. Discover some of the reasons why you should make sleep a health priority, learn how much sleep your body needs and especially discover how your bedroom and your mattress affect the quality of your sleep.

## WHAT IS 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 to your well being when regularly replaced within the sleep environment. The BSCC is comprised of over 450 manufacturers, retailers and component suppliers from the mattress industry.

## BETTER SLEEP ON THE WEB

A resource on sleep and mattresses is available to you on the web by logging onto The Better Sleep Council Canada's web site at <http://www.bettersleep.ca>

**For a Free Copy of A Guide to Better Sleep or for Bulk Orders Write to:**

\$1.00 CDN

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