

Get a Great Night's Sleep

Research shows that one of the most important things for our overall health, especially as we age, is a good night's sleep. Following a normal sleep schedule is crucial to keeping your body on track in terms of concentration, memory function and immune system.

Basically, when you fall out of your sleep routine, your health pays for it. Sleep requirements vary from person to person, but most healthy adults require seven-and-a-half to nine hours of sleep per night. Feeling sluggish during the day may be an indicator that you aren't getting enough sleep, so be sure to pay attention to your body to determine your personal sleep requirements.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Older adults who don't sleep well are more likely to suffer from depression, attention and memory problems, excessive daytime sleepiness, and experience more nighttime falls, according to the Sleep Foundation.

As we age, our body produces lower levels of growth hormone. This can cause a decrease in slow wave, or deep



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sleep. When this happens you produce less melatonin, leading to fragmented sleep and more frequent wake-ups during the night hours. These are normal parts of growing older, but by keeping to a strict sleep routine and listening to your body when it's tired, you can help stave off these potential effects.

SLEEP APNEA

Untreated sleep disorders, like sleep apnea, can put a person at risk for cardiovascular disease, headaches and other issues. If you or someone you love experience snoring on a regular basis and it can be heard from another room, or make gasping noises during your sleep, these are serious

signs of sleep apnea. Check with your physician to see what kinds of tests they offer for determining if you have a sleep disorder.

IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP

Here are a few tips from the National Sleep Foundation to get a better night's sleep:

Use low-wattage bulbs and

turn off the TV and computer at least one hour before bed.

Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark and cool.

Move bedroom clocks out of view to prevent disruptions to your sleep.

Adjust your bedtime to match when you feel like going to bed, even if that's earlier than it used to be.