

Sleep Can Keep



by **O. A. Battista**

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has contributed numerous articles to leading magazines in recent years. This article is excerpted from his latest book, "How to Enjoy Work and Get More Fun Out of Life," copyright 1957 by Orlando A. Battista and published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J.

Art by Robert Bonfils

OVER A PERIOD of many years, as I have met men and women between 70 and 90, I've tried to learn from them the common denominator that helped them enjoy life. Although one man quipped that his secret was "I always did what my wife told me to do," all of them mentioned the importance of getting plenty of sleep.

You can't enjoy the best of health, zestful living, and profitable work without getting sufficient sleep. Through sleep, muscles and the nervous system get a chance to replenish themselves fully; it is the only way to prevent your machinery from running down.

Yet sleeplessness is fast becoming a major problem in our country. For example, a recent poll discovered these startling facts:

1. Fifty-five percent of adult Americans are chronic nonsleepers.

2. More than 500 tons of sleeping pills are sold each year.

3. Businesses based on mechanical sleep-inducers are booming: mattress-pulsating machines, muscle massagers, eyeshades, earplugs, anti-snore balls, and other gadgets.

The trouble with the average person is that he wants to turn sleep on and off like a tap. It's little wonder that symptoms of inadequate sleep are so widespread. If the following symptoms apply to you, then you are "riding on life's rim," driving yourself into premature old age, and even risking complete failure:

1. Frequent colds and undue sensitivity to infections.

2. Lukewarm enthusiasm toward new things.

3. Dark circles around your eyes that sleep fails to clear up.

4. Your mind tackles problems associated with your work as though it were being flogged.

5. A small job requiring physical effort, like washing the dishes, seems like a major undertaking.

6. Your ambitions and your energy never team up, so that you live in constant frustration.

Here is a list of 10 rules guaranteed to help you get more out of sleep. Once again, these have been culled from my discussions with numerous long-lived persons:

1. Nothing is more conducive to a good night's sleep than an honest day's work.

2. If you feel rested, you've had enough sleep.

3. Never wrestle with the day's problems or mull over your pleasant recollections. Let everything go for the morrow.

4. Learn to think of sleep in terms of quality rather than quantity. A short but deep sleep does much more for you than a long period of restless tossing and turning.

5. A half-hour nap equals three hours of night sleep. Remember, the cat's reputation for having nine lives stems from its ability to revitalize itself by taking frequent naps.

6. Develop the habit of never sleeping later than 6 o'clock in the morning and insomnia will be the least of your problems.

7. One doctor attributes inability to sleep to an empty stomach. But limit your raid on the icebox to a light snack. Heavy foods require major digestive efforts which make restful slumber difficult. A glass of milk or a cup of bouillon or cocoa is suggested before sleep.

8. Learn to pull down the shade on your mind and shut out the day's doings. Say you're in the habit of retiring at 11 o'clock. Then at 10:30 stop anything you may be doing that requires mental effort or concentration. Your job for the next half-hour is to free yourself from the mental and emotional tensions which have accumulated during the day. If your nerves feel particularly jumpy, take a bath at body temperature, or tune in some soothing music on the radio.

9. Fear nothing. Fear and worry are ridiculous states of mind, except in an overtired person! Don't let a

fear grip you at bedtime, because that's when its grip is strongest. Brush off fear until dawn; the chances are it will lose most of its sting.

10. Pray. There's nothing old-fashioned or childish about prayer. Thank God each night for how lucky you've been. Ask Him to stay on your side for the future, too.

Men should take a tip from the women; they usually go through a nightly cosmetic routine that helps them prepare their minds for sleep.

My personal routine is to imagine a wastebasket beside the bed and as each cluttering thought comes to mind, I mentally discard it by tossing it into the wastebasket. As soon as the basket is full and my mind is empty, I'm off to slumberland.

How to get the most out of sleep has been a problem for many centuries. Here are some tricks used by famous persons to capture elusive sleep. One or more of these may fit your case or at least give you an idea or two to try out:

Irving Berlin eats scrambled eggs before going to sleep; Jimmy Durante eats an onion sandwich; Olivia de Havilland munches lettuce and drinks hot milk with a lump of butter in it. Bernard Gimbel falls asleep studying his competitors' advertisements; Yehudi Menuhin does his letter-writing at night. Patrice Munsel prepares lists of Things to Do Next; Dorothy Kirsten makes long-range needlepoint designs; and Lily Pons works on her autobiography!

Take stock of your own sleep-hunting strategy. Write it out step by step. Examine it critically. Maybe you can work out a ritual that will help you get to sleep faster.

Sleep needs vary with the individual, and you will have to find out what is par for your own course. For example, the older you are, the less sleep you need. And a man who digs ditches all day should need less sleep than the one who spends his day digging for facts.

Here is a table of the average num-



ber of hours' sleep needed by various age groups:

Age:	Hours:
newborn babies	16
6	11½
10	10
15	9
20	8½
25	8
60	7

These figures may or may not fit your cycle at your particular age, but this will be easy enough for you to check. I know some old people who sleep exceptionally long hours. And others who appear to sleep few hours take catnaps during the day.

Sleep researchers at the University of Chicago have discovered that some people who have trouble falling asleep are simply going to bed too early.

There's an old English saying worth noting by professed sleep addicts:

Nature requires five, Custom gives seven, Laziness takes nine, and Wickedness eleven.

Considering you spend one-third of your life in bed, sleep is a problem worthy of your most conscientious efforts. Remember, how much you get out of life depends largely on how much you get out of sleep.