Sleep

Sleep is a powerful tool for our body and mind to recover from the day. It recharges our batteries – literally allowing us to create energy reserves for the next day. Studies have shown that getting enough quality sleep - at least 7 hours recommended for adults - is one of the most important ways we can stay healthy. But, sleep is also one of the aspects we fall short on – either deliberately or because of disruptions or difficulties with falling or staying asleep.

Sleep can be a challenge, especially for shift workers or those experiencing stress. Insufficient sleep can lead to fatigue, which studies report can lead to impaired judgement and decision making ability, reduced response time (both in speed and thought), and increased tendency for risk-taking, to name a few effects. When tired, people tend to take shortcuts and be less conscious of their postures.

Tips to help improve sleep:

- Create a sleep routine
- Stay on the same sleep-wake schedule, even on weekends
- Build in time to wind-down. Give your body and mind a chance to prepare for sleep. Avoid reading complex material or having to think hard about things at bedtime because working out your brain keeps your body awake
- Avoid screen-time and blue light at least one hour before bedtime. The artificial or "blue" light can disrupt your body's preparations for sleep by stimulating daytime hormones
- Dedicate a space for sleep
- A dark, cool bedroom promotes restful sleep
- Try sleep or relaxation apps or activities such as meditation, yoga and deep breathing
- Exercise during the day
- Get outside - iincreased exposure to natural light during the day promotes a healthy balance of the sleep hormone (melatonin)
- If you nap during the day, avoid snoozing any longer than 20 minutes as it could affect your nighttime sleep cycles
- Don't struggle on your own – there are many reasons why you might be having trouble sleeping. Talk to your doctor or a professional to get to the root of the problem

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