

OptiHealth Workshop: The Laws of Health, Part 3

Rest

Rest involves more than sleep. Rest **balances** productive time with restorative time on a weekly cycle involving stress management, interpersonal relationships, security, life purpose, and fulfillment.

Like breathing, eating, and moving, **sleep** is an **instinctual, critical** component of our lives that can be carried out in either an unhealthy or a healthy manner.

- Laboratory rats die from sleep deprivation before dying from starvation.
- The world record for not sleeping is 11 days (266 hours). Hallucinations can occur within 24 hours.

Quality sleep is necessary for maintaining a robust **immune system**.

- Getting less than **7 hours** of sleep on a **regular basis** negatively affects your immune system – making you **3 times** more likely to get sick.

People who do not get enough sleep tend to be **overweight** and have **shorter lifespans** (and tempers).

- Not getting enough sleep alters the metabolic pathways regulating **appetite** – making you feel hungrier, eating more, and gaining weight.

During **REM** sleep (Rapid Eye Movement = the “deep sleep” phase of the 4-part sleep cycle), the brain/body experiences **intense neuroactivity**, including:

- Blood circulation increases
- Oxygen levels rise
- Brain tissue absorbs more amino acids

Good sleepers are mentally sharper and are at **lower risk** for neurological diseases, such as **Alzheimer's**.

Even though our bodies appear at rest during sleep, there is much **metabolic activity**:

- The **free radical** substances that are produced throughout the day and are involved in a variety of disease processes are **neutralized** at a greater rate during sleep.
- **Reparative** processes are also active at an increased rate during sleep, such as protein production in fixing the damages sustained during the day.

Q: How much sleep do we need for optimal health?

A: Sleep requirements vary with age:

- Newborns 18 hours
- Children 12 hours
- Teens 9 hours
- Adults 8 hours
- Seniors 9 hours

For adults sleeping less than 7 hours/night, mortality rates increase:

- 21% for women
- 26% for men

Healthy Sleep Habits for Consistent, High-Quality Sleep:

- **Turn off the lights.**
 - Light suppresses the body's production/release of **melatonin** (the “sleep & immunity” hormone).
 - Exposure to light at night reduces melatonin blood levels up to 71%.
- **Avoid electronic devices** - No screen time for 30+ minutes before sleep.
 - TV, computers, mobile phones = neuro-activating.
 - Mainly interferes with the body's natural ability to fall asleep.
- **Stick to a schedule.**
 - Trains your body to establish a natural, healthy sleep/wake cycle (circadian rhythm; melatonin).
 - Sleep before midnight can be worth twice as much (more serotonin to convert to melatonin).
 - Sunlight > stimulates **Serotonin** production > Darkness >> Sleep > converted to **Melatonin**.

- **Relax & Get Comfortable.**
 - Avoid stimulating activities for 60+ minutes before sleep.
 - Develop a routine (brush teeth, wash face) to “signal” the brain for sleep.
 - Dim the lights.
 - Read positive material.
 - Play peaceful music.
- **Do NOT use sleep medication.**
 - Over-the-Counter (OTC) Sleeping Aides, Off-Label Rx/OTC Meds, Rx Sleeping Pills, Alcohol.
 - Increase risk for disease, addiction; decrease quality of sleep, decrease lifespan.
 - Mainly disrupts REM Sleep.
 - Interferes with hormonal and reparative processes, which mainly occur during sleep.
- **Avoid stimulants** during the day (nicotine, caffeine).
- **Plan your evening meal** – what and when:
 - Eat your lightest and ‘easiest-to-digest’ meal in the evening.
 - No Snacking – especially late in the evening or during the night.
- **Be more active during the day.**
 - Daily exercise and physical activity are healthy and improve sleep.
 - Avoid strenuous exercise for 60+ minutes before sleep.
- **Be thankful.**
 - Contemplate the day’s blessings.
 - Spend some time in prayer.
 - Forgive those who may have wronged you.
 - Commit to make amends with those you may have wronged.
 - Resolve personal conflicts as they arise or as soon as practical/effective.
 - “A clear conscience makes the best pillow.”

Review:

Get 7+ hours of quality sleep on a regular schedule each night.

Result:

Feel better, Think clearer, Look younger, Live longer

“Waking up with a clearer mind and more energy is entirely possible and worth turning-off-the-light an hour earlier than usual.”

In achieving our goal of living to 120, getting quality sleep is an important habit that we should make part of our healthy Christian lifestyle.