

Targeting Wellness Newsletter

Good News for Good Health!


July 2023

Quarter 3—Sleep

Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIFs

In this issue

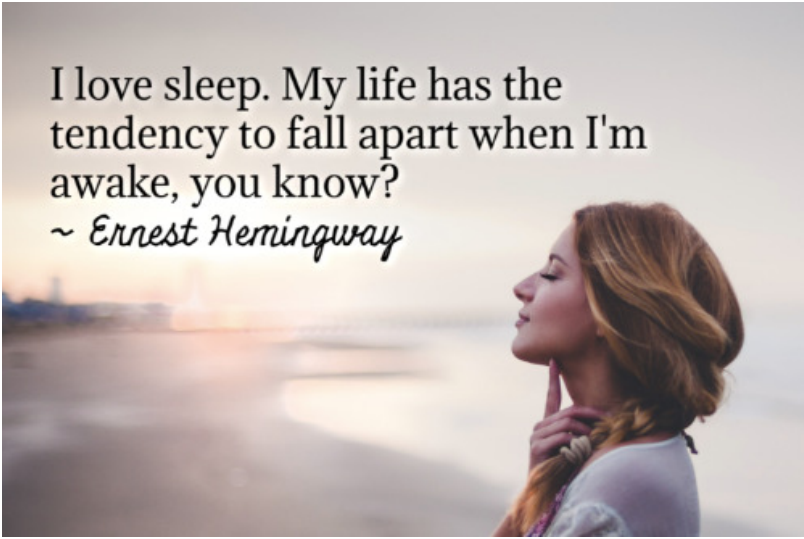
1. Sleep Should Not Be Taken Lightly
2. Stages of Sleep
3. Good Sleep for Good Health
4. Sleep and Mental Health
5. Sleep Hygiene Checklist
6. Shift Workers—Tips for Improving Sleep
7. Recipe: Week-long Meal Prep Suggestion



Sleep is the golden
chain that ties health
and our bodies
together.

Thomas Dekker

The body needs its rest, and sleep is extremely important in any health regimen. There should be three main things: eating, exercise and sleep. All three together in the right balance make for a truly healthy lifestyle. - Rohit Shetty



I love sleep. My life has the
tendency to fall apart when I'm
awake, you know?
~ Ernest Hemingway

Getting Enough Sleep Should Not Be Taken Lightly

Sleep is crucial in helping your body recover and fight off disease. It also greatly impacts our brain function.

In today's high-paced and often stressful modern life, many of us don't feel we have the time to even stop and rest. Getting a good night sleep might seem like a dream. There is a lot that has been learned of just how valuable the quantity and the quality of sleep is for the health of our physical and mental well-being. Even with so much that has been discovered, so many continue to burn the candle at both ends, edging their bedtime back a few hours just to 'get it all in'. Studies show that not getting enough sleep (quality matters too!) can raise ones risk of many diseases and disorders. These range from heart disease and stroke to obesity and dementia.

There is more to good sleep than just the hours you spend in bed.

A sleep expert from NIH explains that healthy sleep encompasses three things:

1. How much sleep you get
2. The quality of sleep—is it uninterrupted and refreshing?
3. Having a consistent sleep schedule



Study showed “40% deficit in learning new material in those who were sleep deprived.” Watch this TedTalk for great insight into sleep: *Sleep is Your Superpower*” with Matt Walker (April 2019).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M uIMqhT8DM>

How much sleep do we need?

Adults: 7-8 hours a day

Over 30% of Americans report getting under 6 hours of sleep a night. When this happens over and over, your body accumulates a sleep **debt**, a sleep deficit that can add up and can negatively impact your well-being.

You don't have to go long before this occurs.

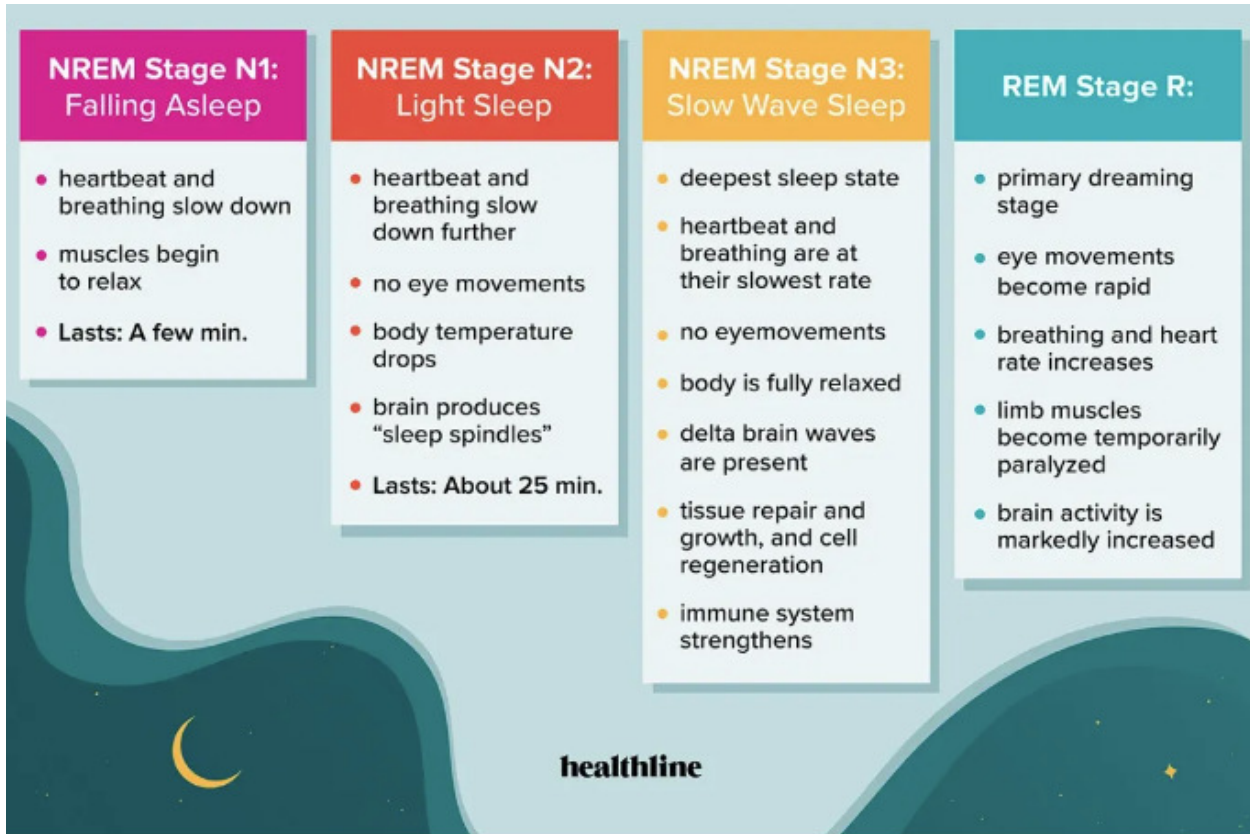
After 17 to 19 hours without sleep, ones ability to react and respond can be compromised by **50 percent!!**

Plus your performance can be worse than having a blood alcohol level above the legal driving limit of **0.05 per cent**.

Stages of Sleep

Sleep plays a critical role in repairing our body, our immune system and our brain. As you know, there are four stages of sleep each playing a part in getting a solid nights rest. Each stage impacts our brain waves, muscle relaxation, recovery and breathing. (Healthline.com)

Sleep is a time for our bodies to repair: Repair muscles, grow bones, manage hormones, sort memories



Our body is really remarkable in all that it does without us even knowing. Keeping our heart beating, breathing, digesting, thinking, cell rebuilding and repairing all as we carry on with our lives. Yet some things cannot be done while awake and require proper sleep for success.

Some may think of sleep as "down-time" for the brain...a chance to give it a "rest". But actually our brain is just as busy as it is during the day, just in a different way. Sleep prepares our brain to learn, remember and create.

It's during sleep that our brain does it's own personal "spring cleaning": Much like our kidneys, the brain works to remove toxins and proteins that have been linked to Alzheimer's disease. These toxins are removed twice as fast while asleep than awake. Also during this time, the brain dumps the neutral "trash bin", moves memories from short-term to long-term storage, and allows the brain to better process emotional situations.

"Sleeping pills are blunt instruments that do not produce naturalistic sleep", Matt Walker comments in his TedTalk.

Good Sleep For Good Health

Immune System

We all know how important sleep is to our mental, physical, and emotional health. Yet we often find ourselves pushing the envelope and stay up way past our “bedtime”. One of the most important functions of sleep is the strengthening of our immune system. When we sleep, our body produces a protein called *cytokines* which boosts our immune system and serves as fuel for our white blood cells. During sleep, the body is able to remove debris from the lymphatic system which also boosts the immune system. This help us fight off sickness and many diseases. Without this, we are more susceptible to bacteria and viruses.

Improves Memory

Sleep serves as an opportunity for our brain to process all the stimuli that we have taken in while we are awake and triggers it to move it from short-term to long-term memory. This allows for recall when we need to bring that bit of information back up in the moment.

While the link between sleep, learning and memory can be quiet complex it’s probably safe to say that we have all experienced the impact of sleep deprivation with impaired concentration and ability to learn efficiently. Sleep is essential in helping us acquire new information and enabling us to recall it at a later time.

Reduces Stress

Sleep is a powerful stress reliever. It improves concentration, regulates mood and sharpens judgment and decision-making. This is primarily due to the increased level of cortisol in the body. Higher levels of cortisol is actually important for a short time, when we are waking up in the morning because it stimulates alertness, increases heart rate and blood pressure. When we are preparing for bed, the cortisol levels decrease to prepare us for sleep. However, when we put off sleep, the levels remain high and interfere with the release of melatonin, a hormone that is essential for sleep-wake cycle.

This elevated cortisol is also responsible for causing systemic inflammation which can lead to chronic disease.

What is sleep restriction?

It’s not just sleep deprivation that causes issues. Sleep restriction is also a real thing. This is when you do not get enough sleep several nights in a row. A Harvard Medical study compared the effects of total sleep deprivation to prolonged sleep restriction. Subjects in the study slept either four OR six hours each night for 14 nights.

It’s no surprise that those sleeping only four hours had greater cognitive deficient than the six hour group. However, after two weeks, even those who got two additional hours had reductions in their cognitive functioning equivalent to not sleeping at all for two days. Another interesting discovery was that after a few days of sleep restriction, the participants could no longer judge how sleepy or poorly performing they actually were.

Sleep is Important for Your Mental Health

Studies involving sleep and mental health have shown that there is a correlation between lack of sleep and the formation of new mental health issues or maintenance of existing ones. How much of an impact is not certain.

When we say “mental health” we are referring to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It determines how we deal with stress, relate to others and make healthy choices for ourselves. Mental health is important at every stage of our life and will ebb and flow as we live through experiences. All components of lifestyle contribute to it: nutrition, exercise, **sleep**, and connection to others, to have a few.

The most common sleep problem associated with mental health is insomnia. This is when it is difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep and is often intensified with mental health disorders especially paranoia and hallucinations.

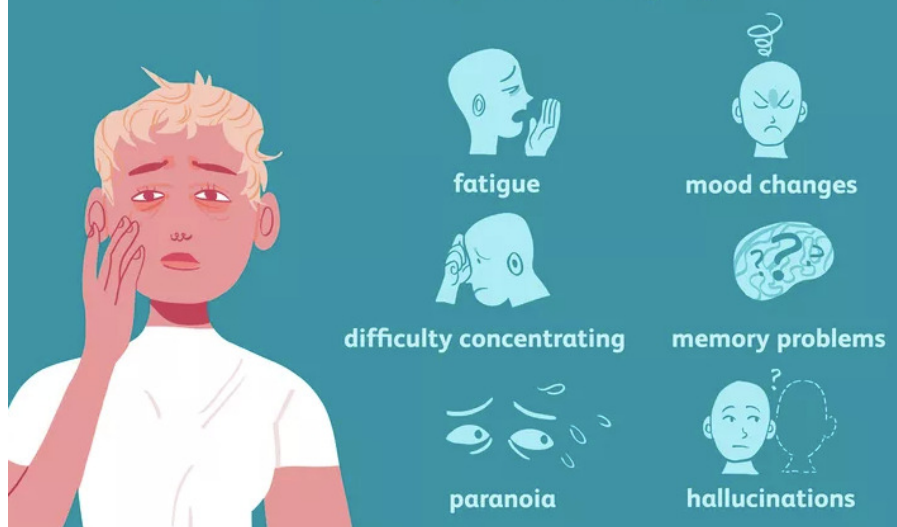
Symptoms of Insomnia

- Not feeling well-rested after a night’s sleep
- Daytime tiredness
- Irritability, depression, anxiety
- Difficulty paying attention, focusing or remembering
- Increased errors or accidents
- Ongoing worries about sleep

Symptoms of Insomnia

- Stress
- Work schedule (shift-work)
- Poor sleep habits
- Excessive alcohol or caffeine use at night
- Habitual nighttime screen use

Common Sleep Deprivation Symptoms



Sources: [verywellhealth.com/why-you-should-never-regret-a-good-night-s-sleep](https://www.verywellhealth.com/why-you-should-never-regret-a-good-night-s-sleep)

Sleep Hygiene Checklist

Sleep hygiene means having good sleep habits. How do you know if your sleep hygiene needs a make over? Think about how you would respond to these questions: Do you are having trouble falling asleep? Are you experiencing frequent sleep disturbances? Or are you suffering from drowsiness during the day? If you answered yes to any of these, you might want to take a look at some the recommended strategies here and pick those that seem like the best solutions for you.

Set a Sleep Schedule and Commit to it. Having a set schedule helps to keep your brain and body in sync:



- ◆ Regardless of the day of the week, try to wake up around the same time every day. Staying up really late over the weekend will throw your sleep rhythm off, starting your week off with a sleep deficit.
- ◆ Prioritize sleep above those temptations to work, study, socialize or exercise when you should be winding down for rest. Calculate when you need to get to sleep based on the time you have to get up. Try to get the recommended 7-8 hours by doing your best to be ready to put your head down on the pillow at that set time.
- ◆ If need by, make this adjustment gradually. It might not work to force yourself to go to bed an hour earlier the first night. Start with smaller goals so you can achieve them and not toss your efforts out the window (or bedroom).

It's all in the preparation! How you prepare for sleep will have a lot to do with your success. Here are some things to keep in mind that can help your unwind from a busy day:



- ◆ Be consistent with your steps. This means set up a nightly routine that you can stick with every night.
- ◆ Try to set aside **at least** 30 minutes for your winding down. Think about what would put you in a state of calm such as soft music, meditation, yoga stretches, reading a book or listening to an audiobook that does not require your full attention to enjoy.
- ◆ Start dimming the lights during this wind down time. That means turn off the all electronic devices and TV up to 60 minutes before sleep. The bright light interferes with your production of melatonin, the hormone our body makes to initiate sleep. Also they cause mental stimulation which is hard to shut off preventing you from feeling sleepy.
- ◆ Sometimes the goal of “falling asleep” causes stress. We tend to put a lot of pressure on ourselves to get enough sleep. Instead of making that your objective, it might be easier to focus on relaxation. Learning paced breathing or meditation can put your mind in a restful state.
- ◆ Tossing and turning may occur.
 - If it does, do not look at the clock. It tends to get you stressed out even more especially if you need to get up for work.
 - Retry the relaxation techniques used before getting into bed
 - If you continue to toss and turn, get up and keeping the lights dim perhaps do some stretching, write down your thoughts or read a book.

Get your bedroom in order:

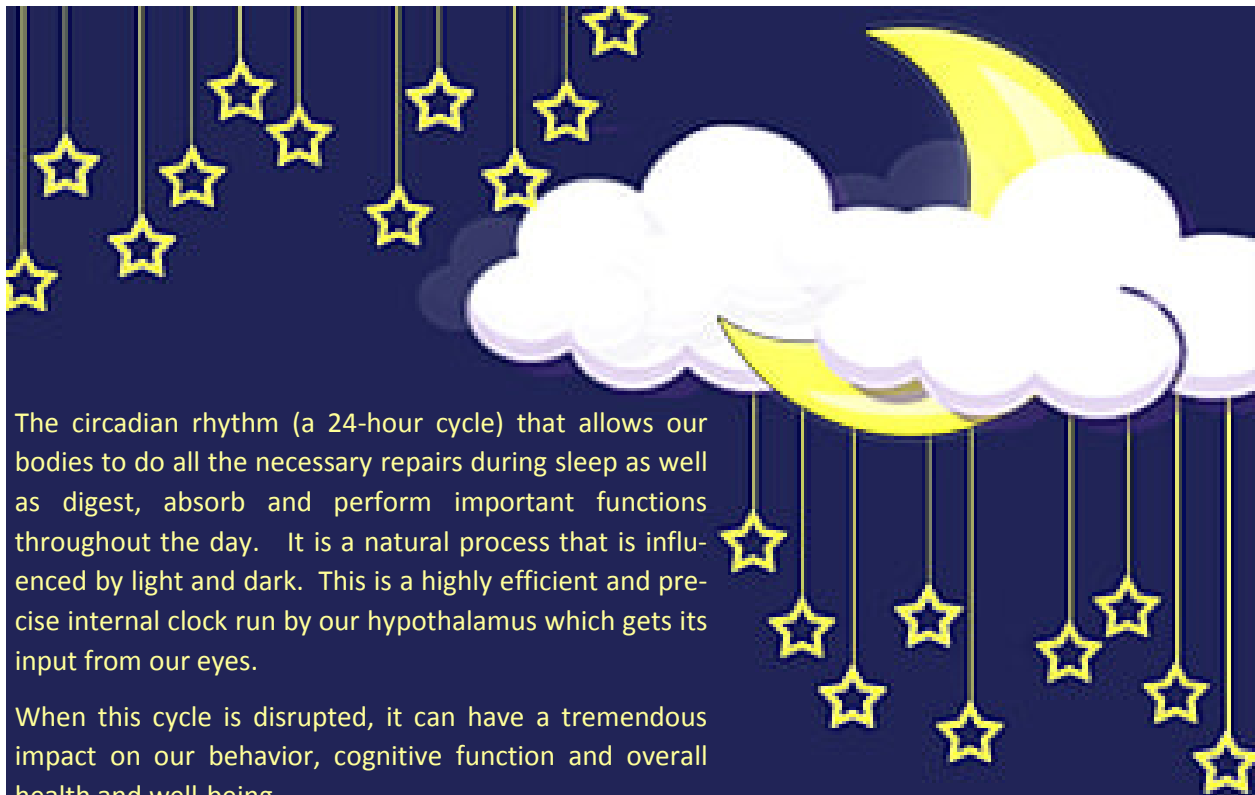
- ◆ Having a comfortable mattress and pillow along with excellent sheets (that feel good against your skin) are first!
- ◆ Set a cool temperature for the room (around 65 degrees is recommended)
- ◆ Block out light either with heavy lined curtains or an eye mask
- ◆ Wear ear plugs to drown out noise especially if you are on shift work.



Cultivate healthy daytime habits:

- ◆ Get daylight exposure especially sunlight in the morning. This helps to keep your circadian rhythm in check.
- ◆ Get regular physical activity but not too close to your bedtime.
- ◆ Avoid smoking, alcohol and caffeine for 4-6 hours before bed. As you know, these are all stimulants. (A glass of wine might seem to relax you but it actually disrupts your sleep later on, interrupting the deep sleep you need for recovery and memory. And caffeine can stay in your system for several hours affecting quality of sleep. It also blocks your brain from detecting adenosine, a chemical that builds up naturally in the body during the day to promote sleepiness.
- ◆ Avoid a big, heavy or spicy meal close to bedtime. When we sleep we want our energy going towards the sleep chores not digesting our dinner

Shift Workers: Tips For Improving Sleep



The circadian rhythm (a 24-hour cycle) that allows our bodies to do all the necessary repairs during sleep as well as digest, absorb and perform important functions throughout the day. It is a natural process that is influenced by light and dark. This is a highly efficient and precise internal clock run by our hypothalamus which gets its input from our eyes.

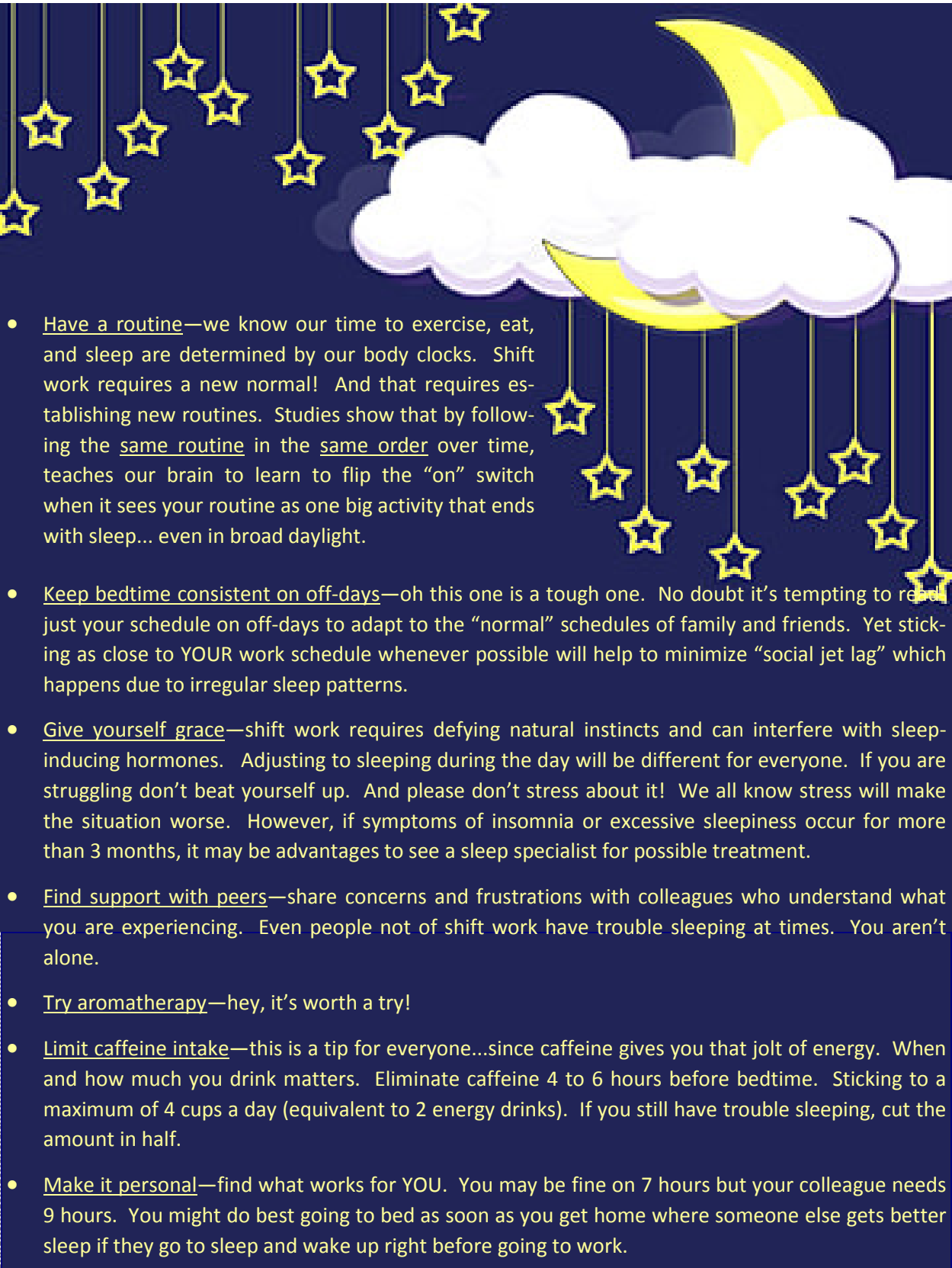
When this cycle is disrupted, it can have a tremendous impact on our behavior, cognitive function and overall health and well-being.

With all the studies done on sleep, researchers have noted the occupational hazards associated with shift work. Yet millions of people have jobs that require an altered sleep schedule.

Don't be despaired. Experts have a few simple tips that you may already be practicing!

- Mentally prepare for sleep—don't put pressure on yourself to "fall asleep now". Trying to "fall asleep" can actually keep you awake. Perhaps write down your thoughts and "to-do" list before bedtime so you can relax your mind on what you need to do when you wake.
- Keep it dark—sleeping while the sun is out is not easy especially when this is the main thing that controls our body's internal clock. Darkness is key! Perhaps invest in Blackout Curtains to block the sunlight. If heading home from nightshift, consider wearing sunglasses to decrease light exposure.
- Beware of melatonin—Light suppresses melatonin so shift workers may be tempted to take a supplement. Advise is do your research and talk to your health professional. Experts are concerned that not enough is known about long-term use of melatonin. Article of interest: <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/people-are-taking-high-doses-of-melatonin-to-sleep-why-experts-are-concerned>

Shift Workers: Tips For Improving Sleep (continued)



- Have a routine—we know our time to exercise, eat, and sleep are determined by our body clocks. Shift work requires a new normal! And that requires establishing new routines. Studies show that by following the same routine in the same order over time, teaches our brain to learn to flip the “on” switch when it sees your routine as one big activity that ends with sleep... even in broad daylight.
- Keep bedtime consistent on off-days—oh this one is a tough one. No doubt it’s tempting to reset just your schedule on off-days to adapt to the “normal” schedules of family and friends. Yet sticking as close to YOUR work schedule whenever possible will help to minimize “social jet lag” which happens due to irregular sleep patterns.
- Give yourself grace—shift work requires defying natural instincts and can interfere with sleep-inducing hormones. Adjusting to sleeping during the day will be different for everyone. If you are struggling don’t beat yourself up. And please don’t stress about it! We all know stress will make the situation worse. However, if symptoms of insomnia or excessive sleepiness occur for more than 3 months, it may be advantages to see a sleep specialist for possible treatment.
- Find support with peers—share concerns and frustrations with colleagues who understand what you are experiencing. Even people not of shift work have trouble sleeping at times. You aren’t alone.
- Try aromatherapy—hey, it’s worth a try!
- Limit caffeine intake—this is a tip for everyone...since caffeine gives you that jolt of energy. When and how much you drink matters. Eliminate caffeine 4 to 6 hours before bedtime. Sticking to a maximum of 4 cups a day (equivalent to 2 energy drinks). If you still have trouble sleeping, cut the amount in half.
- Make it personal—find what works for YOU. You may be fine on 7 hours but your colleague needs 9 hours. You might do best going to bed as soon as you get home where someone else gets better sleep if they go to sleep and wake up right before going to work.



Prep Idea taken from [Oh She Glows](#)

Plant-based, gluten-free, nut-free, re-fined sugar-free

Week-Long Power Bowl Meal Prep Suggestion

Oh She Glows provided a wonderful and easy suggestion on what to prep so you can throw together quick and healthy power bowls throughout your week for either lunch, dinner or both! Pick whatever veggies you like (or have on hand) and a favorite whole grain. Switch it up each week for diversity and to avoid boredom if you like a lot of variety. Change up the dressings. Use them in a wrap or soup instead of a bowl. Add whatever other protein you wish such as beans, tofu, tempeh, etc. Having prepped food in the fridge helps reduce temptation to buy take-out, helps keep you on a healthier meal plan, saves you money in buying your lunch every day, and saves a ton of time after working a long day!

Power bowls are so fun for family meals because you can switch up the veggies and toppings to suit each palate, giving kids control to build their own bowls. This recipe is also a handy make-ahead option if you're having friends over for a meal. Simply chop all the veggies the night before and refrigerate them in containers. Just before your guests arrive, pop the veggies into the oven, cook the quinoa, and prep the toppings. After cooking, you can all have fun assembling your own power bowls and everyone will be super impressed by the stunning rainbow-colored meal!

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE ROASTED VEGGIES:

- 3 small (680 g) sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped (4 cups)
- 4 cups (500 g) brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved*
- 1 medium (800 g) cauliflower, chopped into small florets (4 heaping cups)
- 1 medium (230 g) red onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 large (500 g) red bell peppers, seeded and chopped
- 3 tablespoons (45 mL) extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Salt and pepper, to taste

FOR THE QUINOA:

- 2 cups (400 g) uncooked quinoa**

FOR THE FRESH VEGGIES:

- 1 medium (370 g) English cucumber, chopped
- 1 medium (135 g) bunch green onions, chopped
- 2 cups (255 g) grape tomatoes (1 dry pint)

FOR THE POWER BOWL TOPPINGS:

- Chopped lettuce/greens (Romaine, Iceberg, kale, etc)
- Salad dressing***
- Ripe avocados
- Cooked beans or lentils
- Nuts and seeds (I use hemp hearts and roasted pepitas)
- Hummus or pesto





Prep Idea taken from [Oh She Glows](#)

Plant-based, gluten-free, nut-free, re-fined sugar-free

Week-Long Power Bowl Meal Prep Suggestion



TIPS FROM THE CHEF:

Looking for a delicious homemade dressing? Try my [Lemon-Tahini Dressing](#), [Shake-and-Go Balsamic Vinaigrette](#) ([Oh She Glows Every Day](#)), or [Roasted Garlic and Red Wine Vinaigrette](#). I always keep Maison Orphee Italian on hand when I don't have homemade dressing prepped.

Feel free to roast a head of garlic along with the veggies. The roasted cloves are especially delicious thrown into my [Roasted Garlic and Red Wine Vinaigrette](#) found in my [Warm + Roasted Winter Salad Bowl](#) recipe.

Make it nut-free: Top your bowl with seeds (such as roasted pepita seeds and hemp hearts) instead of nuts and make sure your dressing is nut-free.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Position two oven racks near the middle of the oven. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C) and line two extra-large (15- x 21-inches) rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. It's important to use extra-large baking sheets so there's enough room for all those healthy veggies.
2. Divide the chopped, "to-be-roasted" veggies onto the baking sheets. Drizzle 1 1/2 tablespoons of oil over top each sheet and toss the veggies until they're fully coated in the oil. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper.
3. Roast the veggies for 30 to 40 minutes (I find 35 minutes is perfect in my oven for lightly charred veggies) until fork tender and golden. There's no need to rotate/move the pans or flip the veggies halfway through baking unless you're particular about even cooking.
4. While the veggies are roasting, add the quinoa to a large pot along with 3 1/2 cups (875 mL) water. Stir. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, then immediately reduce the heat to low-medium, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and cook for 12 to 14 minutes, until the water is absorbed and the quinoa is fluffy. Remove the lid and fluff the cooked quinoa with a fork.
5. While the quinoa cooks, chop the cucumber and green onions. Rinse the tomatoes (I hold off slicing them until just before serving).
6. Remove the roasted veggies from the oven. Once mostly cool, transfer all of the veggies and quinoa into containers, seal with airtight lids, and place into the fridge for up to 4 days.
7. To make the power bowls: Add a couple generous handfuls of chopped lettuce/greens to the bottom of a large shallow bowl. Drizzle with a bit of dressing and toss the lettuce/greens until coated. Top with spoonfuls of your prepped food (quinoa, roasted and fresh veggies)—I always warm up the quinoa and roasted veggies first! Now, add diced avocado, more salad dressing, cooked beans or lentils, nuts and seeds, and hummus or pesto. Keep the power bowl flavors interesting by changing up the toppings each day! Fresh herbs would make for a nice punch of flavor.

Debby Schiffer, NBHWC, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIF

E-mail: debby_schiffer@targetingwellness.com Office: 856-322-1220

Cell: 856-520-9908