

ARE YOU GETTING ALL THE SLEEP YOU NEED?

- [] A *Prevention Magazine* survey shows that 40% of U.S. adults "suffer from stress every day of their lives and find they can sleep no more than six hours a night."
- [] In the *Time Magazine* cover story, "Drowsy America," the director of Stanford University's sleep center concluded "most Americans no longer know what it feels like to be fully alert."
- [] Most experts agree that three to four hours of sleep once a week won't cause any long-term problems. You might feel terrible the next day, but you can catch up by going to bed earlier the next evening or napping when you can.
- [] If you're short on sleep, exercise is good in moderation. Try a brisk walk or some light stretches. You may be able to increase your energy level for at least two hours.
- [] Take a multi-vitamin every day to reduce feelings of lethargy and to ensure that you're getting most of the basic nutrients.
- [] *Your immune system and mental skills decline* when you habitually get less sleep than you need. If you're losing more than ten hours a week, decide to catch up now before you hurt yourself. Recovery may take a month or more.
- [] You may have to force yourself to get into bed at 8:30 or 9:00 on evenings when you would rather be up and about.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TAKING A NAP

- [] Some people nap easily; others can't nap at all. Based on one study, people who nap for 30 minutes each afternoon have a 30% lower incidence of heart disease than people who don't nap at all. Napping increases your alertness for the rest of the day. Although everyone feels a little groggy for a few minutes after a nap, this gradually subsides.
- [] The extra edge that napping provides can last for 8 to 10 hours.
- [] Short naps are more productive than long naps. A short nap will leave you refreshed; a long nap may interfere with your sleep that evening. Naps of 20 minutes or less usually help avoid REM sleep, a stage where you're likely to wake up groggy and stay that way.
- [] The best nap time is between 2 and 3 p.m. Any later and your nap may be too deep, interfering with your nightly sleep. Naps are not a substitute for the proper amount of sleep. Don't use naps to catch up on sleep if you short-change yourself each evening. Nap in a bed or cot but not a chair. Your quality of sleep will be much higher and the immediate benefits more apparent.
- [] Secure the nap area before dozing off. Ensure the phone is unplugged or the answering machine is on, and turn your cell phone off. Hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign or do whatever it takes to make sure you won't be disturbed during your nap, unless, of course, you want to be disturbed. Zzzz.