



### Why Is Sleep Important?

During sleep our bodies actively recovers itself, including the following:

- The body's spring-cleaning process (autophagy) happens mostly during sleep
- Our bodies mop up a lot of the waste that is accumulated in our cells.
- It's thought that when we sleep our brain cells shrink in size to allow gaps to open between nerve cells; this allow our brain to wash away waste products that build up and accumulate whilst awake.
- When you sleep well it is much easier to make better choices the following day.
- You crave less sugary food and feel more energetic, which leads to more physical activity

### **This then is self-reinforcing!!**

When you're more physically active, eat healthy food and prioritise relaxation you sleep even better!!!

### How Much Sleep Do You Need?

Everyone is individual so it's best to R.A.T.E your sleep.

**Refreshed?** – If you wake up refreshed that is a good indication of good health

**Alarm** – Do you need an alarm to wake up? If you wake up at around the same time each day with no alarm that is a good indicator of health.

**Time Elapsed** – Do you fall asleep within 30 minutes of going to bed? – If not then there is likely something in your lifestyle that is untraining your body's own natural ability to sleep

### How To Get Better Sleep:-

There are several tips to enhance sleep:-

**1. Create a darkened bedroom** – Try and rid of all light so that it is not stimulating the SCN. Buy black out blinds, or really dark curtains. Leave electronic devices downstairs and out of the bedroom

**2. Embrace Morning Light** – Our exposure to daylight in the morning is a critical part of our evolutionary heritage. It's critical for feelings of well-being in the day but also for good sleep at night. It doesn't matter if it's cloudy and grim, we are exposing ourselves to a much bright light from being outside than we are inside. It helps set your bodies rhythms. If we can get ourselves outside we are also exposing ourselves to the great health benefits of being in nature. You could even leave your car 10 mins from the office and walk the last bit to work.

**3. Create a bedtime routine** – No tech before bed (ideally 90 mins), dim lights, watch relaxing stuff on tv, no caffeine, cooler heat in bedroom, set alarm for bedtime

**4. Manage Your Commotion** – Minimise any activity that creates stress before bed i.e. don't watch stressful tv, try not to focus on financial, stressful family matters before bed, don't check emails, meditate before bed, be thankful before bed

**5. Enjoy Caffeine Before Noon** – Caffeine has a 6 hour half-life and a 12 hr  $\frac{1}{4}$  life. So 1 cup of coffee at 12noon will still have caffeine stimulating effects at midnight that night!!!

