

The Sleep Solution
by
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Q. I have tried all different kinds of schedules, but for some reason they all end up falling apart. Do you have any ideas for keeping more order in the day?

A. Yes, an often overlooked but very important part of the daily schedule is sleep. While most people give it a low priority, it turns out to be greatly needed. When done correctly, it lays the groundwork for physical well-being and cooperation.

While we think of sleep as the last thing that needs to be done in a day, it might be better thought of as the first. In ancient times it was considered the beginning. Great value was given to this time of rest thought of as the day's preparation. While it is not easy to return to this logical thinking, it is worthwhile to ponder it. The main goal is to try to help all family members get enough sleep as often as possible.

The Benefits of Sleep

Amid all the pills people take and give to their children, the doctor visits made related to various ailments, and the huge amount of time and money spent on supplements and programs related to healing, a regular 8 – 10 hour schedule for adults and a consistent 10 – 12 hour one for children,

beginning and ending at the same time each day, can accomplish much. Here are some known research-based results.

- Increased concentration
- Better at sticking to and completing tasks
- Decreased crankiness
- Decreased anger and aggression
- Elimination of daytime sleep lapses
- Not feeling tired during the day
- Weight control
- Increased energy

The Body Maintenance Process

All during a well-planned and well-executed sleep, the body systematically and with much detail goes about its work. Here is a brief description of what takes places.

- Cell, tissue, and organ repair
- System regulation - circulatory, respiratory, digestive, lymphatic, and excretory
- Thought refreshing – through dreaming

When done correctly as part of a long and consistently scheduled format, sleep greatly enhances daily life. It creates a dramatic break between the activities of the day before and the new ones to come. It provides a fresh start. Interestingly enough, increased sleep, especially on a consistent basis, brings with it relief from many of the problems that are associated with

ADD/ADHD. Research tells us, moreover, that many car accidents that used to be routinely attributed to alcohol and drugs are now associated with a lack of sleep.

The Sleep Schedule

While it is definitely accepted as valuable to have a consistent sleep schedule for every member of the family, it is recognizably difficult to do. The challenge is being able to find enough time for it while living in a society that values a long list of other tasks and responsibilities. Taking into consideration the realities of life, here is a list of strategies that you might find helpful.

- Set up evenings as a winding down time.
- Have a designated bedtime and wake-up time for all family members.
- Have regular bedtime routines for all family members.
- Include a time each evening to talk over the events of the day.
- Include a time each evening to prepare for the coming day.
- Teach your child about the advantages of sleep.
- Teach your child about the physical process connected with a complete, full, and regularly scheduled night's sleep.
- Allow about 15-20 minutes in the bedtime routine for falling asleep.
- Stay with your young child until he or she falls asleep.
- Check on your young child frequently and regularly after putting him or her to sleep.

- Add an extra half-hour to your morning schedule to allow some enjoyable family interactions before each of you go off in your separate ways.

As you and your family come to understand sleep as the starting point of the day, try to give it the priority it deserves. As you all experience the gift of rejuvenation and health, you are likely to see many problems fade. In addition, a few more family meals may show up, and you may discover some newly available time for family reading, singing, and conversation. Moreover, it is inexpensive and convenient.

Sleep tight just right... all night!

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