The 8-hour myth: sleep better and live longer with these 7 healthy tips

BY IRIS TECHNOLOGIES TEAM

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<u>Introduction</u>

Stop looking for the fountain of youth or that magical spell that helps you sleep better at night!

We asked some gamers how they deal with spending countless hours in front of a computer and if you're curious about what they said—keep reading.

Put that ice-cream back in the freezer

Don't we all love a midnight snack?

Whether we're just laying in bed, browsing social media or watching a show on Netflix, a good snack to have around is always nice.

But beware!

Late night snacking can not only make you gain weight easily but it's really bad for your sleep.

Try to avoid carb-filled fatty foods late in the afternoon and evening.

Maybe even try to fix your diet altogether.

Bad eating habits can lead to obesity and diabetes but the poor sleep it leads to can also be a cause of many diseases.

Instead focus on eating clean meat, fresh vegetables, fruits like cherries and kiwis and nuts like almonds. Stay away from any kind of dietary and supplemental pills, unless your doctor has prescribed them to you.

If you want to sleep better and live longer find a good eating cycle for your needs and wants and work with it.
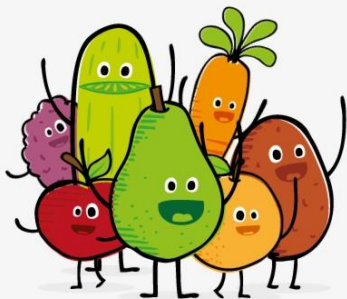
Where's the tea

Sure you've probably had a little too much to drink one Friday and you woke up the next morning feeling like you lived through the events of the third Transformers movie.
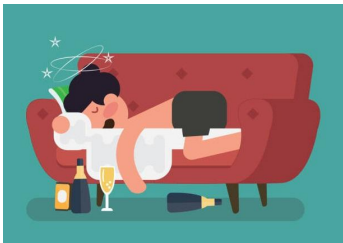
That's because alcohol reduces the so called REM stage of sleep which is pretty much the one responsible for getting a good night's sleep.

How to deal with this?

Drink lots and lots and lots of water. Water is good for you in every aspect. It keeps you healthy and hydrated.

You can also drink juice and warm chamomile tea to relax you before going to sleep.

Avoid all kinds of coffee and energy drinks at least 6 hours before having to go to sleep. You don't want to stay awake until morning regretting your choices, do you?

Another thing you should promptly avoid is smoking.

The nicotine you ingest rushes through your system and can lead to insomnia, sleep disorders, heavy breathing and problems with waking up.

Heavy smokers also sleep lightly and may wake up during the second stage of light sleep and even sleepwalk.

The 10,000 steps challenge

An average adult takes around 3 to 4,000 steps daily.

If you're an avid gamer though, an overwhelmed student or a swallowed by the system office worker, you probably haven't seen the Sun in a while and your daily step count consists of trips back and forth to the fridge and the bathroom.

As you can probably guess that's super unhealthy for your sleep and your life expectancy.

That's why scientists recommend to slowly build up your daily step count until it reaches 10,000 steps a day.

Some of those can be from jogging, running or climbing stairs for better results.

How does exercise help you sleep?

Well clearly when you get tired you'll fall asleep a lot easier.

But not only that! Exercise can help prevent diseases like high-blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, insomnia, mental health problems like depression and anxiety and can help you lose weight.

All of these health issues mess with your proper sleep cycle and decrease the quality of your memory storage and your rest time.

Exercise also helps with bedsores or soreness caused from sitting in your office chair all day.

Remember however that you should work out at least 3 hours before your scheduled sleep time as adrenaline and the endorphins released during exercise will keep you awake and energised for a while.

The 8-hour myth

If you fall asleep a little before having to wake up you might disrupt your sleep cycle.

Sleep has four stages — two light NREM stages, deep NREM sleep and REM stage.
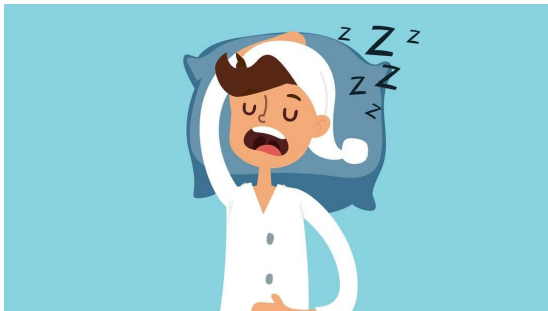
If you are abruptly woken up by your alarm during deep sleep for example, you'll feel dazed and confused, weak, moody and also very forgetful.

Bad sleeping habits can have damaging effects on your memory as well. The REM stage starts around 90 to 120 minutes after falling asleep, so make sure you have more than that time before having to wake up so you can get at least a somewhat adequate rest.

How much sleep you should get for a proper night's rest however is a subject to discussion.

You've definitely heard the 8-hour myth, however that's all it is—a myth.

That's just an average amount people that have been asked get.

Do you have that one friend though that went through the whole school year on Red Bull, chips and 3-hours of sleep every night?

And that cousin you have that sleeps for 14 hours every day with no problem and doesn't do anything with their life?

How much sleep you should get every night and is good for you is fully dependant on your own daily routine.

Of course if you sleep 13 hours one night you won't fall asleep easily the next night.

If you've ran 15 km one day you'll sleep like a dead man that night.

The best advice to follow is look at what you do with your day—do you work, go to school, for how long, what exactly do you do, do you take naps, drink coffee and so on—and then choose the proper amount that will get you going through the day.

The time you leave for sleep should be between 5 and 10 hours for the healthiest results.

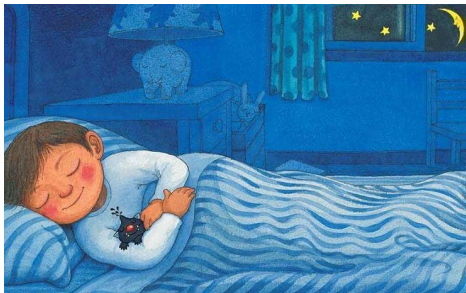Most importantly when you find the right routine stick to it forever!

Sleep like a vampire

No, not for a thousand years and then rise up like Nosferatu.

Adjust your bedroom environment to be as dark and as cold as possible.

If there's too much light shining on you it can wake you up easily or lead to erratic eye movements, disrupted dreams and loss of memory.

During the day however you should try to get as much sunlight as possible.

Thanks to sunlight we can produce vitamin D which improves brain function.

Exposure to sunlight also prevents depression and mood disorders and helps with sleep quality.
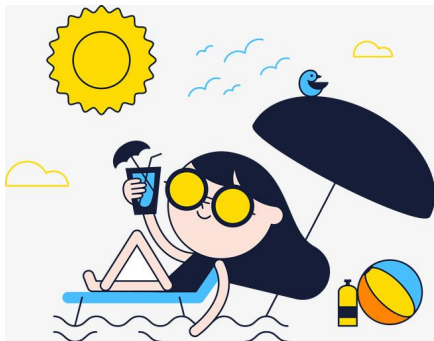
Sleeping in a cold room is also very beneficial to health and sleep quality.

During sleep your body's core temperature slowly decreases so sleeping in a hot room can lead to sickness, flu symptoms like fever and breathing problems.

Sleeping in a hot room also poorly affects memory and thinking skills.

It's best if you open up a window and let that fresh night air in.

The more comfortable you are the better you'll sleep.

For more tips on how to properly optimize your sleeping environment check out our "10 tips for falling asleep quickly" article.

Relax, take it easy

Why do we need sleep anyway?

To gain more energy, repair and recuperate our body, brain and memory for the new day that awaits us.

That's why sleep is so important. Which is why we should strive to make our rest time the best.

As I already said, make sure to find the most proper sleep cycle for you and stick to it.

If you continuously get less sleep than needed you'll suffer from sleep deprivation.

Your body can't adapt to that and sooner or later it will need the energy it hasn't been getting. This can lead to serious consequences. Most importantly make sure you're getting enough sleep when you're on the road.

If you have to drive and aren't feeling up to par, take a break, sled for a couple of hours to get back on track.

Not enough quality sleep leads to moodiness, mental disorders, weakness. Sleep deficiency disrupts your daily routine and in the long run can lead to heart diseases.

Overall it's better to get another 30 minutes of sleep than to be useless and grumpy all day.

Reduce your screen time

The effects of blue-light technology are evident in our everyday life.

As already mentioned light at night is very bad for your eyes and sleep.

Blue light being with shorter wavelength than any other type of light decreases the production of melatonin, the hormone that signals our brain it's time to go to bed.

Too much exposure to blue light can have negative effects on your overall well being and life expectancy.

The solution to this is to reduce your daily screen time.

Don't watch TV right before going to bed. Try to resist the urge to browse Instagram on your phone until the early morning hours.

Reduce the negative effects of technology by adjusting your screen settings, your desk environment, getting protective eyewear or installing protective software like [Iris](#).

Protect your Eyes. Be Healthy. Achieve more

What are you waiting for? Your eyes will thank you! 😉

[Download now](#)

Read more tips on how to deal with blue light technology:

- "[11 Ways we strain our eyes with computers](#)"
- "[How blue light destroyed our sleep](#)"
- "[7 Tips for eye protection in front of the PC](#)"
- "[How monitors destroyed our eyes](#)"
- "[Blue light - learn the fact and fiction behind this modern threat](#)"

Resources used for this E-book:

- https://thesleepdoctor.com/2018/10/09/how-your-sleep-position-affects-your-health-your-dreams-and-your-personality/?cn-reloaded=1
- https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/best-sleep-positions#1
- https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/the-benefits-of-left-side-sleeping/
- https://beddingpal.com/how-to-sleep-better/
- https://www.sleepassociation.org/about-sleep/stages-of-sleep/deep-sleep/