



## **Sleep: 10 ways to help you drastically improve the quality and the quantity of your sleep.**

Sleep is an important part of our daily rhythm. This is the time the body can get to work to repair both physiological and psychological problems and damage.

If you are an athlete or regular trainer, then sleep is the chance for you body to adapt to the day's training to come back stronger than before.

*“Sleep is a heightened anabolic state, accentuating the growth and rejuvenation of the immune, nervous, skeletal and muscular systems.”*

The excepted wisdom is aim for 7-9 hours of sleep a night, with the average adult reaching between 6-8 hours regularly.

### **Top 10 tips for better sleep**

- 1) **Maintain a regular schedule** - go to bed and wake up at the same time 7 days/week. This will allow your body to better regulate the releasing of hormones that regulate your sleep/wake patterns. This may also help make you smarter.
- 2) **Sleep at least 7 hours per night.** This gives your body enough time to go through all the stages of both physical and psychological repair it needs.
- 3) **Be asleep by 11 pm.** This will help you maintain a regular circadian rhythm, by keeping you in line with the sun rising and setting.
- 4) **Avoid caffeine in any form in the afternoon and evening.** Caffeine has a half-life of around 6 hours. So that coffee you have at 3pm will still be keeping you awake at 9pm, and still affecting the quality of your sleep at 3am.
- 5) **Exercise regularly** - this has a profound impact on sleep habits by regulating stress hormones and endorphins. Limit late night exercise though, as it can stimulate cortisol (stress hormone) levels which will

prevent you from getting to sleep.

- 6) **Turn your room into a bat cave.** Literally. Keeping the sleeping room dark will preserve melatonin (sleep hormone) production will help you get to a deeper sleep quicker. So no TV, no bright alarm clocks, and no one is allowed to turn on a light to go the bathroom or get a drink - this means you or any other family member.
- 7) **Create a relaxing sleep area** that is dark, quiet, and free of clutter.
- 8) **Avoid sleeping in strong electromagnetic fields.** For example, no TV, keep electronic alarm clocks at least 3 feet from your head, avoid electric blankets, keep away from WiFi equipment and mobile phones – and if possible turn them ALL off.
- 9) **Take a hot bath 1 hour before bed** to help lower your core temperature so that your body prepares for sleep. Also make sure that you are not too hot in bed, if anything aim to keep cooler than usual.
- 10) **Avoid excessive alcohol consumption** especially right before bed. Alcohol and many other drugs prevent us from achieving quality sleep which means we will not be rested by morning. Be careful also of any desserts that may contain either alcohol or caffeine.

And because I'm a generous kind of guy, here is 3 more bonus tips:

- 11) **Try supplementing with Zinc and Magnesium** – around 30 mins before bed. I've yet to meet the person who is not deficient in at least one of these minerals, and regular intensive training increases the demand for both. Magnesium gel sprayed behind the knees is especially affective and can also be used for children when applied to their feet.
- 12) **If you struggle to get to sleep at night and you are a regular hard trainer/athlete** - it could be a sign that its time to reduce the training intensity of you current training block, as your nervous system needs time off to recover.
- 13) **If you can get to sleep but don't feel rested and you are a regular hard trainer/athlete** - it could be a sign that your current training volume is to high – half you working sets for the next week and see if recovery improves.

## References, information sources and related articles:

[http://www.t-nation.com/free\\_online\\_article/sports\\_body\\_training\\_performance/more\\_poliquin\\_top\\_tips](http://www.t-nation.com/free_online_article/sports_body_training_performance/more_poliquin_top_tips)

<http://www.charlespoliquin.com/Blog/tabid/130/EntryId/23/Switching-into-Yin-gear.aspx>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep#Sleep\\_stages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep#Sleep_stages)

<http://www.charlespoliquin.com/Blog/tabid/130/EntryId/61/Exhausted-Mothers-and-Fat-Loss.aspx>

[http://www.charlespoliquin.com/ArticlesMultimedia/Articles/Article/255/How\\_I\\_Replenish\\_Magnesium\\_Levels.aspx](http://www.charlespoliquin.com/ArticlesMultimedia/Articles/Article/255/How_I_Replenish_Magnesium_Levels.aspx)

<http://www.elitefitness.com/forum/weight-training-weight-lifting/good-night-sleep-611709.html>

<http://www.sleepdex.org/patterns.htm>

[http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/children\\_shealth/7807049/Children-with-regular-sleep-patterns-smarter-at-school.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/children_shealth/7807049/Children-with-regular-sleep-patterns-smarter-at-school.html)

<http://www.medicinenet.com/sleep/article.htm>

## About Brian

Brian is an aspiring strength and health coach, having worked as a fitness instructor and personal trainer since 2006.

If you would like to arrange a consultation or regular training to help you achieve your training and health goals, please email [brian@brianellicott.com](mailto:brian@brianellicott.com)

