



Chiropractic Miracles

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Dr. Atwell's Breakthrough Patient Newsletter...

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Dear Patient and Friend,

We hear a lot about the brain these days. The media gives us lots of information about brain diseases, like stroke or Alzheimer's. But recently, there has been more of a push to educate the public about how to take better care of your brain, through good lifestyle habits and consulting the appropriate wellness professionals.

One simple thing anyone can do to improve brain health, that costs no money and is very pleasurable, is to sleep enough. Typically, adults need seven or eight hours of sleep each night, and kids usually need even more.

While you are asleep, your mind quiets down, and daily maintenance is performed – your brain needs to clean and detoxify itself, and this process occurs during sleep. So it's fair to say that if you don't sleep enough to complete the maintenance, your brain won't work as well, and over time, it can get sick.

So, plan your day and evening so you can get enough sleep. If you have to get up at 6 AM, plan to get to bed between ten and eleven. If you can sleep until 7 AM, as long as you get to bed before midnight, you should be okay.

Sometimes we have to miss a little sleep, and it's essential to get a little extra sleep the next few days to make up for it.

Don't mess with your brain health – get enough sleep!

Napping, An Often-Overlooked Health Habit

Most parents have encouraged their young children to take daily naps, to get them enough sleep and also to give themselves a break to accomplish chores that may be disturbed by the constant distractions.

But napping is not just for kids – responsible adults often take naps, and it helps them on so many levels. Getting a little extra sleep during your day offers a host of health assets.

For example, in a recent Reader's Digest article by Tina Donvito, many health benefits can be realized by including naps in your daily routine.

Naps increase your alertness. They interrupt any mid-day tendency toward "sleep drive," which makes the rest of the day more productive. Many famous scientists, notably Einstein and Edison, took regular naps, especially when they were engaged in breakthrough research. The National Sleep Foundation did a study on NASA pilots, and the results were stunning – they found that a forty-minute nap caused an improvement of 34% in performance and 100% in alertness!

Napping also helps you remember better. Researcher Elizabeth McDevitt, working with renowned napping expert and author of "Take a Nap! Change Your Life!" Dr. Sara Mednick at the University of California Sleep and Cognition Lab, stated "Napping strengthens the neural connections that form our memories. During sleep, brain areas that were involved in initially acquiring a memory might be reactivated." This reinforces memories and effectively moves them into long-term brain storage.

Taking regular naps is also good for your heart. When you nap, you come out of "fight or flight" stress that accompanies much of our waking time, and you revert to the parasympathetic part of your nerve system, the part that rests, digests, heals and recovers. So, when you rest, your heart's work is reduced, and your body can turn on its best healing power. This has a pronounced impact on the health and function of your heart. A study even showed that men who napped were 37% less likely to die of a heart condition.

Being sleepy increases blood pressure, and dumps large quantities of cortisol, the stress hormone, into the bloodstream. That's how napping reduces your stress – the levels of cortisol go down. Naps even decrease obesity, since the blood sugar levels that drop mid-day are better addressed with sleep than with a doughnut or candy bar. This is good for your heart, as well as your overall well-being.

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Napping, An Often-Overlooked Health Habit

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It should be obvious that taking a nap is a great mood elevator, making you feel better in general, but most people don't realize that napping can also boost your immune response and your ability to fight disease.

Napping has been shown to cause refinements of physical performance, from fine-motor skills to athletics. "Napping can help alleviate... motor fatigue, restoring speed and accuracy," McDevitt asserted. She continued, "Growth hormone levels spike during sleep, suggesting it is an opportune time for muscles and connective tissues to repair themselves, so a nap following physical training might help jump-start the process of muscle repair."

Fatigue suppresses sensory perception, so napping heightens your senses, waking up your brain and helping it concentrate on the most relevant and appropriate input. This makes you sharper and less likely to be distracted than you are when you're tired.

Napping even makes you more creative. Sleep specialist and founder of the "Sleep Easily" method Dr. Richard Shane says, "When a computer stops working well because it is overloaded with too many open files, rebooting it clears away the clutter and the computer functions better," Dr. Shane says. "When you nap or sleep, that 'reboots' your brain, clearing away the clutter." This may help explain why when you "sleep on it," even for a short nap, you suddenly have solutions and new ideas."

A recent study even found that while the left half of your brain, used for reason and logic, was resting during sleep, your right side, used for creativity, was active.

We have learned so much about the effect of napping on your brain, heart, immune system and attitude. What we learned as folklore now has a scientific validation – napping is not only good for kids, it's good for you, too.

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Great Thoughts on Sleep

Everybody sleeps, but everyone has their own personal relationship with sleep. Here's what some of our influencers, writers, celebrities and thought leaders have to say on the subject of sleep, courtesy of brainyquote.com.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep." **William Shakespeare**

"As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so a life well spent brings happy death." **Leonardo da Vinci**

"I like to nap. I do like to sleep. Sometimes I sleep in between takes." **Jodie Foster**

"It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it." **John Steinbeck**

"Sleep has been provided by nature to do the body's healing work, and it takes seven or eight hours for this process to happen. Commit to getting at least seven to eight hours of good quality sleep every night to keep your body and hormones in balance." **Suzanne Somers**

"Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night." **William Blake**

"I don't seem to require a lot of sleep. If I get four, five good hours, I'm fine. But sleeping is sort of dull. There's a lot of other good stuff that you can do without just lying down and closing your eyes."

Betty White

"I love sleep. My life has the tendency to fall apart when I'm awake, you know?" **Ernest Hemingway**

"Depending upon my activities, I sleep between five and ten hours every night. I use only one heavy down comforter over me, summer or winter. I have never been able to wear pajamas or creepy nightgowns; they disturb my sleep." **Marilyn Monroe**

"I say, you work eight hours, and you sleep eight hours - be sure they're not the same eight hours." **T. Boone Pickens**

"Sleep is the best meditation." **Dalai Lama**

"An important part of any focusing regimen is to set aside time at the end of the day - just before going to sleep - to acknowledge your successes, review your goals, focus on your successful future, and make specific plans for what you want to accomplish the next day."

Jack Canfield

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~ Suzanne Somers*