



Getting a Good Night's Sleep

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In this busy world we live in, sometimes it's hard to find the time to allow ourselves to recover from our workouts. However, just as you take the steps necessary to fit in your workout and prepare a healthy meal, it's paramount that you take the time to rest and get a good night's sleep.

Getting adequate amounts of quality sleep will not only make you feel better during your waking hours, it will also help you to increase your metabolism and maximize the effectiveness of your workout and nutrition program. Studies show that getting adequate amounts of quality sleep (about 7-8 hrs) can help your metabolism continue to run strong and help you avoid food cravings during the day. When you are only getting 5-6 hrs of sleep a night or the quality of your sleep is compromised, your body becomes sleep deprived. This lack of sleep causes a hormonal imbalance that keeps the sleep deprivation cycle going. It increases your appetite and causes your body to hold onto fat.

Ghrelin and Leptin are two hormones that regulate your appetite. Ghrelin is the hormone that increases your appetite and Leptin is responsible for suppressing your appetite. When you are sleep deprived your body will release more Ghrelin and less Leptin, leaving you open to overeating and making poor food choices the next day. The stress hormone Cortisol is also released in greater amounts. An excess amount of Cortisol in your body has been shown to increase belly fat.

So, what can you do to get a better night's rest? Start an evening ritual. First make the commitment and decide to get 7-8 hrs of sleep a night. Figure out what time you need to be in bed with lights off in order to get your 7-8 hrs of sleep. Your last meal or dinner should be at least 2-3 hrs before that time (the process of digestion may hinder your quality of sleep).

Start getting ready for bed 30 minutes before your designated "lights out" time. All your housework, homework and activities should be completed by then. Set your alarm for the next day and turn off all electronics. Wash your face or simply put on your pajamas. Prepare yourself a cup of calming decaffeinated tea and moisturize your hands with a lavender scented cream. Climb under the covers with a good book. Finally, turn out the lights and drift off. This is just a suggested ritual. The important thing is for you to find your own way to relax before getting into bed. This will set the tone for a good night's rest.

Finally, if you have difficulty getting quality hours of sleep, you may consider seeing Vito, our Nutritionist at Evolution Fitness. You may have a vitamin or mineral deficiency. Vito can review what you currently consume, blood work and make suggestions for certain dietary adjustments that will assist you in getting a more quality night's rest. Make a good night's rest a priority. You will be rewarded with a healthier body, mind and spirit the next day!