



Adventist  
Health Ministries  
GENERAL CONFERENCE



Seventh-day  
Adventist Church

# LET'S CELEBRATE **REST**

**R** is for rest, which restores life



**CELEBRATIONS**  
LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

# REST INSTITUTED BY GOD

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The Bible records that in the very beginning, God instituted a weekly rest to provide a much-needed break from the tedium of work. Our Creator knew that in order to function optimally we need balanced daily rest in addition to weekly rest, as found in Exodus 20:8-10 (NJKV):

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.”

The Lord wants us to fellowship with Him, especially on the Sabbath day, because we are His children. Part of the blessing of Sabbath rest comes when we connect with others during these special hours. Christ said in Mark 2:27, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Regular, daily sleep and a weekly rest empower us to be receptive to the blessings of God physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, thus continually restoring us to optimal health.



# Catastrophic outcomes

There once was a boy named Suresh. He was the oldest of three siblings. His family was not financially well-to-do. They had to work hard to earn their living. It was difficult for him to understand why he had the responsibility of working and helping his parents financially. This resulted in a strained relationship with his parents. He found himself using harmful drugs. Complaints of his behavior began to spread to his parents. He even ended up in jail for causing trouble in the community.

After some time, these lessons led to him to make a change, and he began living a better life and left behind the behavior that had caused him so much trouble and ruined his family's reputation.

Suresh became a truck driver. He worked very hard and started helping his family financially. Both Suresh and his family were very happy. However, he was working day and night with little rest. He was given an urgent request to deliver a consignment even though he was tired. He was forced to rest on the side of the road. He chose to park on a railway track even though the nearby villagers tried to discourage him from parking his truck there. But he insisted. Before long, the train approached with a loud rumbling noise, but it was too late for Suresh and his companion to move off the train track. This tragic day resulted in Suresh's life being cut short — all because of extreme tiredness. His judgement was clouded by fatigue, and thus, he made a decision that ended his life prematurely.



Sleep science tells us that as in the case of this experienced instructor, tired minds are much more likely to make serious mistakes. In most societies of the world today, a significant percentage of the population is sleep deprived. In the United States fatigue is one of the 10 most common reasons people visit a physician!

The need to rest and relax appears to be the greatest when there seems to be no time for it. Without rest and relaxation all humans suffer cognitive impairments. Tired people become inefficient, slower, less safe, and make more mistakes. To remain "at the top of our game" we need adequate sleep each night. There have been many attempts to increase productivity by extending the workweek and daily working hours. They have all failed because we each have a physiological need for rest each day, as well as a day off each week and a restful annual vacation. For peak cognitive performance and abundant energy, we must celebrate the refreshing gift of sleep. When our brains are tired enough we will go to sleep involuntarily. These short periods of rest are called micro-sleeps and generally last from a fraction of a second to no more than a second or two. If we are idly sitting in a chair, this usually causes no problem. Should we be operating a complex piece of machinery or carefully seeking to solve a multifaceted problem, however, these momentary lapses could result in catastrophic outcomes.





# SLEEP DEPRIVATION

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Many factors in our increasingly chaotic, 24/7 world of tempting and demanding activities contribute to the growing problem of sleep deprivation. The rising number of entertainment options, such as playing computer games or watching television in the evenings, tempt us to delay going to sleep.

Research indicates that our emotional control and our efficiency, productivity, and safety suffer when we are sleep deprived. Also, we become less effective at recognizing the choices that are available to us and less capable of deciding which of the choices is best.

The frontal lobes of our brains are where we combine the current information from our senses with previously learned information and life experiences to make our decisions. It's this portion of the brain that is most affected by insufficient sleep and rest. Fatigue lowers our cognitive efficiency, lessens our awareness of our surroundings, reduces our ability to process new information, decreases our long-term memory, and impairs our ability to learn new information. Because success in almost all of life's endeavors is determined by the quality of the decisions we make, it is vitally important to rest.



## SLEEP DEBT

When we miss out on sleep, we accumulate what is known as "sleep debt." A research study was conducted monitoring four groups of people who all had the same demonstrated skill level in performing identical tasks. The groups were observed for 21 days. The following chart demonstrates how productivity significantly diminished as nightly sleep was shortened.

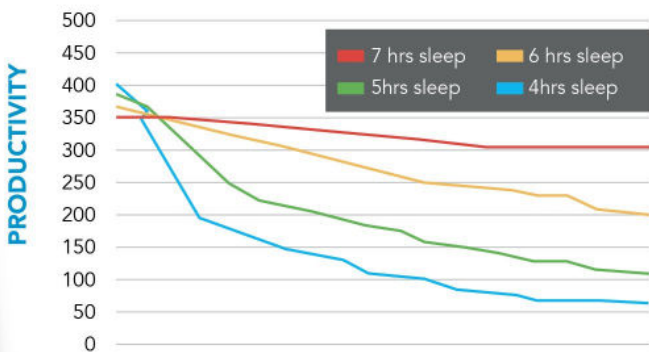
Sleep has traditionally been studied for its effects on the function of the brain and emotions. Current research, however, is finding that even moderate



*Sleep decrease stress*



sleep debt in healthy volunteers can alter their metabolic state in such a way that it mimics the glucose metabolism of diabetics. In one particular study, after four hours of sleep for six nights, healthy young men experienced a 30% decrease in their body's ability to metabolize carbohydrates. They experienced significantly higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol and a decrease in insulin sensitivity. This and other research is suggesting that there may be a link between the growing epidemic of sleep deprivation and the epidemic of obesity.



Interestingly, sleep deprivation also leads to decreased performance similar to that which occurs when a person is under the influence of alcohol. Studies have shown that 16 to 18 hours of wakefulness (one long day) in healthy adults results in impairments comparable to those experienced by individuals with a blood-alcohol level of greater than 0.08% (the legal limit).

# HOW MUCH SLEEP DO WE NEED?

Sleep needs vary between individuals. Nearly all sleep experts agree, however, that seven hours of sleep per night is enough to “get by on” but that most people need about eight hours for optimal cognitive performance.

Students will often study most of the night when cramming for an examination, and they risk the consequences of poor grades as a result. Sleep provides the “right stuff.” It prepares bodies and minds for peak performance.





# STEPS TO GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

- Learn to value sleep. We never accomplish what we do not value.
- Establish a regular bedtime ritual to let your mind and body know that you are preparing to sleep.
- Exercise appropriately every day, at least four to five hours prior to retiring.
- Establish regular times for rising and retiring and stick to them every day — even on weekends.
- Use a comfortable, firm bed located in a quiet, cool bedroom not cluttered with TVs, computers, or exercise equipment.
- Eat lightly in the evening, several hours prior to bedtime.
- Avoid watching exciting or depressing TV programs or movies, engaging in stressful events such as arguments, or making momentous decisions right before bed.
- Avoid the use of sleeping medications, caffeine, and alcohol, which disrupt normal sleep architecture.
- See your personal physician if you suspect a sleep disorder or other medical condition.
- Put your trust in God. Give Him your problems and anxieties.

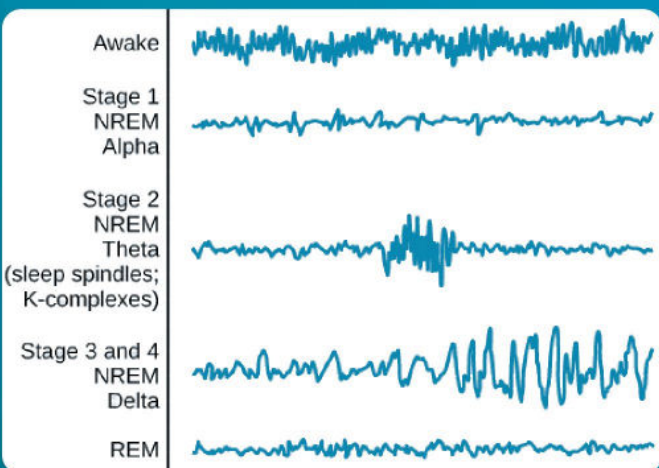
**Remember: Tonight's sleep builds tomorrow's energy! Sleep is as important as diet and exercise, only easier!**



# STAGES OF SLEEP

Sleep is divided into various stages. There are two major types of sleep: nonrapid eye movement sleep and rapid eye movement sleep.

Nonrapid eye movement sleep is characterized by four stages. The first two are deviations from wakefulness and generally last only a few minutes. Stages three and four are known collectively as "slow-wave sleep." It is during this period of deep sleep that the restoration and growth of body tissue occur and immunity to infections is strengthened.



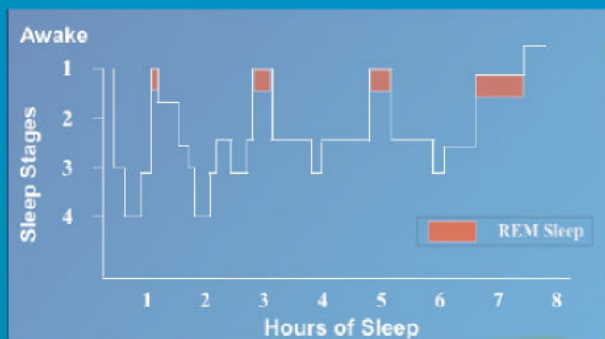
Rapid eye movement sleep is characterized by a waveform similar to wakefulness. The eyes will move back and forth rapidly under closed lids as though looking from side to side, even though the person is sound asleep. Our dreams occur during this phase of sleep although we usually recall very little of the dream content. Some individuals may sleepwalk, wet the bed, or grind their teeth during this phase. Rapid eye movement sleep is very important for mental and emotional restoration. Many important and fascinating functions take place here, including memory organization and reorganization, as well as the refreshing of memories.

During a good night's sleep, these two types of sleep occur in approximately 90-minute cycles that are repeated from four to six times during the night. Both types of sleep are necessary for complete physical and mental rest. The recuperative value of sleep can be measured by the shape of these cycles and is called "sleep architecture." Good sleep architecture results in recuperative sleep, which enhances learning and improves productivity. Certain factors — such as irregular times for retiring and awaking, worry and anxiety, some medications, alcohol,



and eating just before going to bed — can impair good architecture.

Sadly, most people are totally unaware of their own reduced capabilities because they have been sleepy for so long they don't know what it's like to feel wide awake! A rested person will accomplish more in less time and do it better, more effectively, and more safely!



## WEEKLY AND ANNUAL REST

Sleep scientists also recognize that to truly remain rested and productive we need both a weekly and an annual rest. In Britain during World War I, increased productivity was attempted by enforcing continuous, nonstop work schedules. It was later recognized, however, that by reducing the workweek to 48 hours and requiring one day of rest per week, productivity actually increased by 15%.

On July 29, 1941, Winston Churchill announced before the House of Commons, "If we are to win this war, it will be by staying power. For this reason we must have one holiday per week and one week holiday per year." This idea was voted into law. As humans, we all have our limitations. We cannot work around the clock or without regular times of rest and, at the same time, maintain a healthy, happy and productive life. We need daily rest as much as we need weekly and annual pauses to provide the mental and emotional recuperation necessary for creativity and positive family relationships. Optimal physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health require adequate rest.



1 G. Krishnakumar, "Sleep-deprived Responsible for 40% of Road Accidents, Say Transport Officials," The Hindu, February 20, 2020, accessed April 12, 2021, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/sleep-deprived-drivers-responsible-for-40-of-road-accidents-say-transport-officials/article30868895.ece>.



## CELEBRATIONS

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**Sign up today!**



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