

Groggy mornings? Here are some tips.

November 2015 Newsletter



Last month, we featured an article on getting enough sleep. This month, we'd like to "wake you up" to a problem that many people have even after they've had a good night's sleep.

Have you heard of "sleep inertia"? It's the mental fog that keeps many of us from feeling sharp and alert first thing in the morning. Experts say it takes the brain time to get up to speed after you first wake up.¹

How can you avoid sleep inertia? While it may not be possible to prevent it completely, there are some actions that can help.

Get into a routine

Dr. Allison Harvey of Golden Bear Sleep Research Clinic at UC Berkeley¹ advises going to bed and waking at about the same time each day. This helps set the body's internal clock. It may help reduce sleep inertia.

If you need an alarm, choose wisely

A buzzer may startle you. Loud music may do the same. There are many alarm systems on the market today: subtle lights, nature sounds and more. And there are lots of smartphone apps that make it easy to wake to your favorite light music or other gentle sounds. Choose an alarm that wakes you without causing confusion or fright. The result could be less sleep inertia.

Hands off the snooze button

It may feel like hitting the snooze button will help that tired, fuzzy feeling. The opposite may be true.² It may actually lead to a greater incidence of sleep inertia. Why? Using "snooze" gives your brain mixed signals about whether or not it's time to get up.

RISEUP

Dr. Harvey also recommends the R.I.S.E. U.P. method of waking up in the morning:²

- Resist the urge to hit the snooze button
- Increase your activity for the first hour
- Shower or wash your face right away
- Expose yourself to sunlight
- Upbeat music — turn some on
- Phone a friend to boost your alertness

Avoid room-darkening shades

Here's another tip: Use regular shades and curtains rather than the types that shut out all light. Why? Your body responds to light and dark. It helps you maintain a regular sleep cycle when you awake to natural light.³ There are even some alarm systems that use light to wake you since light is a cue for the body to become alert.

Wake-up call

Understanding sleep inertia can help you grasp why you may go through the first few minutes or hours of the day in a bit of a fog. And the tips above may help overcome this issue.

¹www.webmd.com. Accessed September 2015.

²www.medium.com. Accessed September 2015.

³www.symptomfind.com. Accessed September 2015.