

# The power of your ZZZZs

October 2015 Newsletter



Do you wish you had more energy to take on each day? Guess what could be holding you back?

It's sleep. If you don't get enough of it, you can't be at your best. Studies show that lack of sleep has a role in many tragic accidents,<sup>1</sup> including 5,000-6,000 car crash deaths per year.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, there's the amazing story of Captain "Sully" Sullenberger — the airline pilot who saved 155 lives by making an emergency landing in 2009 on the Hudson River in New York City. He said his difficult landing might not have been possible had he not had enough sleep the night before.<sup>3</sup>

## The basics of sleep

The human body is built to be awake for about 16 hours a day. Then the body needs sleep so it can rest and repair itself. The average adult needs between 7-8 hours of sleep per night.<sup>4</sup>

## What happens if you don't get the sleep you need?<sup>4</sup>

- Studies have found a link between lack of sleep and health problems like heart disease, heart attacks, diabetes and obesity.
- Chronic pain can be intensified by lack of sleep.
- You tend to be more moody or cranky when you're sleepy.
- Your sex life may suffer if you're often tired.
- You may not think as clearly or act as logically.
- Your memory can be impaired.
- Lack of sleep can weaken your immune system and make you more prone to getting sick.

## Getting the shut-eye you need

There are many things that can interfere with sleep. Having young children and a hectic lifestyle are examples. Here are some steps you can take to improve your sleep:<sup>5</sup>

- 1. Try to keep your sleep/wake schedule as regular as possible.** Let your body get into a rhythm for when it's time to rev up or slow down.
- 2. Exercise regularly.** There are many reasons to exercise, but one is so you're tired at bedtime.
- 3. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and heavy meals** for several hours before you go to bed.
- 4. Create a relaxing bedtime routine.** If the nightly news agitates you, don't watch it. You can catch up on the news in the morning instead. If a hot bath or shower calms you, take one shortly before bed. If a good book helps you get into sleep-mode, read for a while. Find what works for you.
- 5. Make your sleep space quiet, dark and comfortable.** Some people find that sleeping in a cool room suits them. Others opt for a warmer temperature. Again, find what works best for you.

## Take steps toward better sleep

If you make gradual changes in your sleep hygiene, you'll be taking a big step toward having more energy and mental power to handle everyday challenges. Sleep tight!

<sup>1</sup>[www.huffpost.com](http://www.huffpost.com). Accessed September 2015.

<sup>2</sup> [www.cdc.com](http://www.cdc.com). Accessed September 2015.

<sup>3</sup>[www.abcnews.go.com](http://www.abcnews.go.com). Accessed September 2015.

<sup>4</sup>[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com). Accessed September 2015.

<sup>5</sup>[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org). Accessed September 2015.