

How Sleep Affects Us

Your Name

Title of course
Professor's name
Date

When talking about basic physiological needs, people usually mention breathing, food, or water. However, less attention is paid to sleeping. A person can survive three minutes without air, three to seven days without water, and nearly 45 days without food. Nonetheless, nobody is ever interested in how long people can survive without sleep or why it is important.

Sleep deprivation is something that nearly every student may have experienced.

Procrastination and inability to manage time effectively leads to sleepless nights before exams. A person who did not get enough sleep may feel differently, as it all depends on how a particular organism reacts to sleep deprivation. Some people say they feel well even if sleeping only a few hours or not sleeping at all. However, such a feeling may be deceiving. Recent research shows that a person who did not have enough sleep at night may feel as energetic and attentive as a person who slept well and can cope with tasks as effectively as others can. Yet one factor can cause a bit of trouble, and that is, a sleep-deprived person loses attention easily. Of course, everyone can lose attention, be distracted by many things, or get bored dealing with a monotonous task. In fact, there are several areas in the brain responsible for refocusing attention. If a person is sleep-deprived, these zones will not function properly; therefore, the person will be unable to refocus. That means the person can work fine, but once he or she loses focus, he or she will definitely become less productive. Moreover, it is more difficult for a sleep-deprived person to notice such a decrease in productivity.

Now, let us attempt to define how many hours of sleep a person needs and who we can call a sleep-deprived person. Well, it is believed that each person needs to sleep at least eight hours at night. Actually, this is a common misconception. Perhaps it originated in modern times, when our working hours became fixed. Most of people have nine-to-five jobs and tend to go to bed and wake up at the same time. On the other hand, it was a normal practice for people to take a nap in the afternoon. People still do this in warm countries, where taking naps is called “siesta”. As we can see, sleeping habits can differ and they do differ in not only different countries and cultures, people can sleep a different number of hours as well. There is no universal answer to the question of how

many hours you have to sleep, as people differ. If you feel fine after six hours of sleep, or you just feel awful if you sleep less than nine hours, then you need to sleep as much as your body requires.

Another thing worth mentioning is how to fall asleep faster and to sleep better. There are times when you have to wake up earlier than usual. In such a case, you have to go to bed earlier as well. It is not so easy to fall asleep though. However, you can do several things to sleep better. First, you need to have some rituals before going to bed. It could be reading a book, taking a 15-minute walk, or anything relaxing you can do before going to bed to stop thinking about your everyday chores. Second, you really have to be tired both physically and mentally. In such a way, you will fall asleep faster, since your body as well as your mind will need to recover after a hard day.

No doubt, sleeping well is a way to a healthy lifestyle. On the other hand, it is an individual need, so nobody knows better than you do how much sleep you need. So, spend some time finding out what is the best option for you. There is a rule we all have to follow and that is, if you sleep better, you definitely feel better.

Bibliography

Cooper, Bell Beth. *How Naps Affect Your Brain and Why You Should Have One Every Day*. 8 July 2013. <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-naps-affect-your-brain-and-why-you-should-have-one-every-day> (accessed August 29, 2014).

Widrich, Leo. *How Much Sleep Do We Really Need to Work Productively*. 8 August 2012. <https://blog.bufferapp.com/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need-to-work-productively> (accessed August 29, 2014).