

Lesson 2

Getting Your Forty Winks

Introduction

The amount of sleep you get can vary from day to day and depends on a number of factors, such as, how tired you are, how much caffeine you have consumed and when, and whether you have got things on your mind.

There are guidelines on the amount of sleep most people need. Generally, it's between 7 and 9 hours for 18 years plus, and longer for 18 years and under.

Getting into the habit of retiring to bed and getting up at the same time every day is a good start and helps improve your sleep.

The science

The world's largest sleep study, involving more than 40,000 people around the globe indicates that whilst many of us struggle to get sufficient shut eye, too much can hurt your brain.

Affected by sleep the most were people's reasoning and verbal abilities. Short-term memory performance was not as impacted.

Positive findings suggest that just a single night's sleep can affect your ability to think better.

Why this helps

In order to function at your best during your waking hours, getting a good amount of sleep, that is, seven to eight hours, is key.

Exercise

For this exercise, you will need 10 minutes.

Noticing how much sleep you need to work and live at your best is enlightening and takes just a few moments to do. Ask yourself these questions:

- How many hours sleep do you usually get per night?
- Are you productive on X number of hours sleep?
- Do you feel sleepy when driving?
- Do you nod off on public transport when going to or returning home from work?
- Do you rely on copious cups of coffee to wake you up and see you through the day?

Next, reflect on the relationship between the amount of sleep you're achieving and your behaviours, e.g. whether you have to drink lots of coffee to stay awake.

Finally, remind yourself that you have already taken the first step to improve your sleep, so well done!

What have you learnt?

The amount of sleep you get dictates how well you function during your waking hours.

Apart from your thinking skills, mental wellbeing, and physical health, sufficient sleep allows you to fully engage in life and enjoy your free time.

Over the next week, try getting eight hours a night. Rate how you feel on days you achieve this, and when you don't. Pay particular attention to how engaged you are at work or at home when meeting your target hours, and when not.

What next?

In our next lesson, you'll be introduced to the top tips on how to get a good night's sleep.