Proper Sleep for Students

By Prachi Salvi, Peer Wellness Ambassador

You woke up, had a bowl of cereal, have two assignments and quizzes due today, grabbed a coffee, went to your college for the morning lecture and now have a work shift in the evening.

Sound familiar?

As an international student, I know first-hand the challenges of balancing schoolwork, job, social life and personal responsibilities. So, it may seem that with everything going on in your life, the only way to get more time is by compromising your sleep. It can be easy to overlook sleep. However, it is a critical aspect of your well-being.

THE EFFECTS OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION ON STUDENTS

We have all stayed up late to stream our favourite shows and movies or to finish an assignment, but did you know that not getting enough sleep can have some serious health consequences?

The reality is, many students don't get enough sleep. According to Harvard Medical School, sleep deprivation can impair cognitive function, making it harder to focus and retain information. This can not only lead to poor academic performance but also affect your physical and social well-being.

Lack of sleep can also impact physical health. As per Nature.com, sleep deprivation can weaken the immune system, making you more susceptible to illness. It can also lead to weight gain, as sleep deprivation has been linked to an increase in appetite and a decrease in metabolism.

The Mayo Clinic also suggests that sleep deprivation may cause irritability, mood swings, and anxiety, which can make it difficult to interact with peers and participate in extracurricular activities. Students should, therefore, prioritize their sleep and make sure they are getting enough restful hours each night to avoid the negative effects of sleep deprivation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER SLEEP

Did you know that getting a good night's sleep can do wonders for your academic performance? The Sleep Foundation, suggests that when you get around 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night, your brain is more alert, focused, and ready to retain more information.

Plus, you will be in a better mood, less stressed out, and ready to tackle critical challenges that come your way as a student.

- Proper sleep has physical benefits too! It helps your body repair and regenerate cells;

- Strengthen your immune system;

- Reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

So, if you want to ace that next exam and feel great doing it, make sure to prioritize a good night's sleep!

TIPS FOR GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

After suffering from stress and insomnia during competitive exams in the past, I've learned to prioritize my well-being over everything else.

I've realized that getting proper sleep isn't just about hitting a certain number of hours, but about feeling relaxed, waking up feeling refreshed, and being able to perform at my best in all aspects of life.

So, what can students do to get proper sleep? Here are some useful tips:

1. **Stick to a consistent sleep schedule:**
   Yes, we know it's tempting to stay up late on weekends but keeping a consistent sleep schedule will help your body get into a routine and sleep better.

2. **Create a relaxing sleep environment:**
   Make your bedroom your own personal sleep oasis. Think cool, dark, and quiet. Plus, you can try out earplugs, eye masks, or even lo-fi music to set the mood.

3. **Avoid stimulants:**
   We get it, caffeine is life. But try to avoid it in the hours leading up to bedtime. Instead, sip on some green tea or chamomile tea for a calming effect.

4. **Exercise regularly:**
   Exercise is not just good for your health, but it can also help you sleep better at night. Although, make sure to avoid working out too close to bedtime.

5. **Unwind before bedtime:**
   Take some time to relax and wind down before jumping into bed. How about reading a book, taking a warm bath, or even practicing some yoga or meditation?

6. **Limit screen time:**
   We know, it's tough to put away your phone or tablet, but electronic devices emit blue light

that can mess with your sleep cycle. Instead, try to read a book or use a blue light filter to reduce the impact. Your eyes and sleep will thank you!

Prioritizing sleep is critically important for students to maintain their overall well-being and academic success. By implementing the sleep tips discussed, students can unlock a better quality of life.

 A well-rested brain is a healthy brain!

The content was adapted from the following resources:
Sleep Foundation
Medicinenet.com
Harvard.edu
Nature.com
Mood disorders: Mayo Clinic
Sleep tips: Mayo Clinic

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