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A Worn-Out Woman's Guide to Good Sleep



Reasons why you need
to get more sleep.



A Worn-Out Woman's Guide to Good Sleep



Reasons why you need to get more sleep.

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Introduction

Sleep- Writing

With all we have to do, it's hard to imagine we'll ever be able to get the sleep we really need. But there is help.

By Caryn Rivadeneira



I'm having trouble figuring out how to introduce this "sleep guide" properly because of one major problem: I'm exhausted. My brain is fried, and my body is worn out. I've spent today as I do many Saturdays, waking up early to take my daughter to her baby class at the park district, cleaning up around the house, baking with my son, going on a fun outing with my family (today, to a local farm), and now catching up on work I fell behind on during the week.





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Frankly, I'd love to be going to bed right now, but that won't happen for a while. Even after I finish this, there's a kitchen to clean up and the final Mitford Series novel calling my name.

I like to think it's just the stage of life I'm at that prevents me from getting the sleep I need—I've got small kids who wake up early and a work-from-home job that keeps me up late. But then I think back to other times in my life when I didn't get enough sleep: during high school and college, when good times to be had outweighed the need for sleep, and during the early days of dating my now-husband, when we stayed up late talking even though we both had to wake up early for work.

So I imagine a day when a good night's sleep—and a consistent good mood—will return to my life. But then I hear stories from other women who wrestle with insomnia and other sleep disorders later in life as well. No matter what your reason is for feeling sleep deprived, going through life exhausted is no way to go through life at all.

Fortunately, help abounds. The following stories offer ways not only to get the rest we need, but great reasons for getting it—beyond the obvious.

One note about sleep issues: Serious sleep disorders aren't covered in this "survival guide," and none of what we offer is meant to replace medical advice. If you suspect your sleep issues run deeper than we cover here, please talk to your doctor.





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Sleep-Writing

Now I'm off to give my kitchen a quick wipe down, dim the lights in my house, read a chapter, and catch up on the sleep I've been missing.

Sweet dreams!

Caryn Rivadeneira

Contributing Editor, KYRIA downloads,
Christianity Today International



Getting Comfortable



4 ways to make your bedroom a restful, cozy place that will give you the satisfying sleep you need.

By Terry Willits

I have to confess, I'm not too good with keeping New Year's resolutions. But this past New Year, I did make one life-changing resolution that stuck. After reflecting on the areas of my life that were out of balance, I realized the solution to most of the issues was simple—get a good night's sleep. So now, I head to the bedroom by 9:00 p.m., take a hot bath, and am in bed by 9:30 to read and wind down for the day. I am a new woman.

There's nothing like a good night's sleep in your own bed to get the rest you need. If you have trouble sleeping, consider the most comfortable touches that will make your bed irresistible. Feather your bed with the things that feel good to you.



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- 1.** Purchase an excellent quality mattress and box spring. Buy a set that suits your comfort preference. Flip it several times a year for even wear.
- 2.** Select sheets that are pleasing to your touch: cool cotton in the summer, cozy flannel in the winter, or silky satin for a little luxury.
- 3.** Top your sheets with a warm down comforter, a light quilt, or a cotton blanket.
- 4.** Have bed pillows that appeal to you.

If you're not happy with the comfort level of your bedroom, tomorrow take a good look at your bedroom and how you can improve it. But tonight, just try turning out the lights a little earlier.

*Terry Willits, interior designer and author of *Simply SenseSational Decorating* and *Creating a SenseSational Home* (both Zondervan), confesses her favorite place on earth is nestled beside her husband of 15 years, Bill, in their bedroom in Alpharetta, Georgia.*

This article first appeared in the Summer 2001 issue of
MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.





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Reflect

- *How could getting more sleep help areas of your life that feel out of control?*
- *Does your bedroom help you relax? What could you do to make it a more restful environment?*



Becoming Well-Rested

Is sleeping together driving you apart?

By Sheila Wray Gregoire



Heather threw off the covers in frustration and propelled herself out of bed. For the last 45 minutes she had repeatedly shoved her husband, Rick, to roll him over and stop his snoring. Her efforts had met with temporary success, but as soon as she would fall asleep again, his snoring would wake her. In defeat, she grabbed her pillow, yanked the blanket off of Rick with a smug smile, and trudged bleary-eyed downstairs to begin another night on the couch.



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When we marry, we dream of contentedly drifting off in each other's arms. Yet numerous culprits conspire to rob us of this bliss. Snoring is by far the most common, affecting close to 30 percent of all marriages. Other people flail in their sleep, leaving their beloveds black and blue. Still others work staggered hours or are repeatedly paged throughout the night. And then there are the little ones, flailers extraordinaire, whom one parent, much to the chagrin of the other, may insist share the bed. Few things disturb sleep more than the presence of a two-year-old.

Every night, for countless couples like Heather and Rick, the sleep wars begin anew. Yet unlike traditional conflicts, one side in this war often doesn't realize the battle is waging. Oblivious to the havoc they're causing, they doze peacefully as their spouses fume.

The Need for Sleep

Even though God designed us to need sleep, sleep problems are rarely considered major health epidemics. Yet Dr. James Maas, author of *Power Sleep*, says that sleep is a necessity, not a luxury. And it's not just the amount of sleep that's important, it's also the type. Even if you're in bed for ten hours, you may not be able to reach all the stages of sleep if you're constantly jolted awake. You may awaken feeling as if you haven't slept at all. And if you don't reach all the stages of sleep, you'll be prone to more viral infections, mood shifts, and emotional stress. Even your safety is jeopardized. The National Sleep Foundation claims that sleep-deprived drivers cause 100,000 traffic accidents each year.





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For most couples in conflict over sleep, these problems affect only one person. Snoring is the only one that can be dangerous at all, as between 5 and 10 percent of snorers have apnea, a condition in which a person temporarily stops breathing, which can be life threatening. Most who disturb their spouses don't hurt themselves—they just keep their spouses awake. These spouses then become grumpy, resentful, and even desperate. And when one partner is chronically sleep deprived, the effects on the marriage can be devastating.

Prerequisites for Sleep

Before we look at solutions, let's look at what causes the problem in the first place. After all, snorers, babies, even flailers wouldn't be a problem if we could all sleep through any disturbance. Yet we can't. As children we learn to associate certain things with falling asleep. If you learn to sleep with silence, it is difficult—if not impossible—to sleep properly in the presence of intermittent noise.

A 1999 study by the Mayo Clinic confirms that people don't automatically adjust to sleep disturbances. Studying couples where one partner was a chronic snorer, Dr. John Shepard, medical director of the 1999 Mayo Clinic Sleep Disorders Study, reports that "eliminating a patient's snoring ... significantly increased bed partners' quality and quantity of sleep." Researchers found that when a partner snores, the non-snoring partner woke up on average 20 times per hour, even if only briefly. In total, they lost an average of one hour of sleep per night, leading Dr. Shepard to suggest that partners of chronic snorers suffer from a sleep disorder themselves. Yet it's not only snorers who can cause these problems; the presence of other constant disturbances can be just as debilitating.





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To Sleep Again

You want the intimacy of sharing a bed, but you just can't seem to sleep together? Here are some strategies to help save your intimacy—and preserve your sanity in the process.

1. Sleep child-free. Parents often allow babies to sleep in bed with them for comfort and convenience. Yet studies show that men, unlike women, often have difficulty sleeping with infants for fear they may roll on them. A compromise may be placing a bassinet next to the bed, so the baby is still near but not disturbing Dad.

A far more intractable problem occurs when toddlers, most of whom will do anything to snuggle in between Mom and Dad, are permitted to sleep there regularly. The conflict comes when one parent wants to evict the child from the bed, and the other wants the child to stay. Not only is reaching a solution between yourselves difficult, you also have a toddler who will fight tooth and nail to stay put.

Nick and Julie had such a problem. After Julie finished nursing Alison, she wanted to put Alison back into her own bed. Nick didn't want to deal with Alison's protests and thought Alison should stay. But Julie, the lighter sleeper, felt Alison interfered with their love life and with her sleep. When Chase was born and they had four people in one bed, Julie couldn't stand it anymore. Nick eventually agreed to move the children, and Julie felt like she got her life back.

Not all experts agree with Julie's solution. Dr. William Sears, author of *The Family Bed*, says that co-sleeping (in which the family sleeps in one bed) is the most





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natural form of sleeping, one that has been the norm for thousands of years. But while this arrangement may have worked well when families had only one bed and needed each other for warmth, it doesn't work as well now. Some families certainly enjoy sleeping together. But most of us will be unable to sleep with small thrashers, because we're not used to sleeping with others kicking and crawling on top of us.

Dr. Richard Ferber, in his book, *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems*, presents a strategy for teaching children to sleep in their own room, in which you put them to bed at set times and allow them to cry, checking on them at intervals to let them know you still love them. It may take some time before children adjust, but they will emerge with an ability to comfort themselves and they will respect order and schedules. In the process, your marriage, and especially your sex life, are bound to improve.

2. Buy the right bed. If your bed squeaks every time somebody rolls over or is so narrow that your spouse knocks you every time he moves, a simple solution may be to buy a new bed. Lisa and Derek recently purchased a king-size, and Lisa says it's changed her life. She had struggled getting to sleep with Derek, who often comes and goes at odd hours because of his job. Now he doesn't disturb her at all. "If our house were on fire," she says, "you'd see me pushing the bed out the door."

3. Reduce noise. For many couples, the main sleep problem they face is noise, whether because of snoring or such periodic interruptions as phone calls. You can take steps to reduce snoring, but if you're plagued by noise of other sorts, consider wearing earplugs. When I was at





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college, I could not sleep with all the background noise in the house. Earplugs took a few nights to grow accustomed to, but they helped drown out the constant chatter. Using them can reduce the chance that phone calls, pagers, or snoring will wake you up. And for spouses who have trouble falling back asleep after being disturbed, this can be a great relief.

4. Sleep apart. If none of these solutions works, you may have to consider sleeping apart. Many of us balk at this idea because we're scared of sacrificing the intimacy of sharing a bed. It's often while lying together that we have our most important conversations and hash out our differences. It's where we plan our vacations, our families, and our retirement, and where we share our most intimate moments.

But if you put your mind to it, you can preserve these moments and still protect your sleep. Try retiring together, in bed, a little earlier than you usually go to sleep. Use that time to do something together, such as watching the news or sharing a Psalm. Then take some time to talk about your day and to share what's on your mind. After you've spent some time together, separate before actually going to sleep.

Some couples find that having the light sleeper go to sleep half an hour before the other helps. The light sleeper has time to reach a deep sleep before his or her spouse comes to bed. But if the trouble continues throughout the night, prepare a second bed. Put a comfortable one in the guestroom, or tuck a pillow and blankets into a basket by the couch, so that no one has to struggle in the middle of the night to put a bed together.

If sleep is only an intermittent problem, keep this bed simply as a back up. My husband and I have such an





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arrangement, and it usually only gets used once a week when he is on call and is paged frequently. But if sleep is a problem every night, go to sleep separately. This removes nightly tension, since each night is no longer a test to see if he or she will keep you awake. To avoid any lingering resentment, take turns being the one to leave the bed, so that both spouses get to enjoy the bedroom. And be sure to tell your children and others who need to know about the sleeping arrangements, so they won't assume your marriage is on the rocks.

Finally, ensure that the process is devoid of blame. Remember, the problem takes two: She thrashes, but he can't sleep with that disturbance. It's not time to lay blame; it's just time to get some sleep!

Sleep is one of the most important functions we have. God gave us rest after creating us, before we even had time to get tired. It was his gift to us, not as a reward for working, but as an integral part of living. Let's make sure we honor our God-given need for sleep, without neglecting the intimacy we need in marriage.

Sheila Wray Gregoire is a freelance writer who lives in Canada with her family—all snorers.

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Reflect

- *What are some sleep issues in your family that are keeping you from getting the rest you need? What steps can you take to improve the situation?*
- *Some of the steps the author suggests—like spouses sleeping in separate beds—seem drastic. Do you agree this is a smart route to take?*



Putting Insomnia to Bed



Stress-related insomnia prompted Randy Frazee to set new boundaries.

By Ginger Kolbaba

Randy Frazee was fried. His demanding work schedule had taken such a toll on his marriage, family, and health that he suffered insomnia for 45 days straight. Finally, he went to a physician who informed him that the insanity of his fast-paced life had caught up with him. He had three choices: move to Borneo; take medication, which would only temporarily relieve the symptoms; or radically change his lifestyle.



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Randy opted for the last choice. Eight years later, his marriage and health have never been stronger. "I sleep like a baby now. And so does my wife!" he says.

In this interview, Randy, author of *Making Room for Life* (Zondervan), explains the secret to slowing down, enjoying life and love, and finding joy again.

You made a radical change to your lifestyle. What was it?

Randy: After my doctor's appointment, I began to study Genesis to see if God had anything to say about my situation. In Genesis 1, I noticed these statements: "And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day," and "And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day." It does that for the entire creation account.

I realized that the Hebrews followed that account: at 6 P.M. they began their day ("And there was evening, and there was morning"). Whatever was first was most important. So for them, the most important part of the day, the relational "season," began at sunset. No rushing, no work. Just a focus on their relationships with God and with others.

I discussed the lifestyle change with my wife, Rozanne, and then we told the kids. We set 6 P.M. as the definitive time to be done working for the day. That created a boundary that said we're going to have time for relationships. If something doesn't get finished, it can wait until the next day.

That shift must have been difficult to make.

It was! During the first few months I tapped my fingers on the dinner table and thought, *What am I supposed to do with all this time?*





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What did you do?

We made the evening meal the first item on our agenda. We have dinner together as a family every night. In our family the meal is a festival. It's not considered a "to do" item for my wife. If there's one thing you want to do for your marriage, don't miss the evening meal. There's something about sharing a meal and conversation that's incredibly powerful.

Then Rozanne and I go for a walk, sit on the back porch, and take in nature, or our family plays a board game or reads a good book together. The possibilities are endless.

But you mentioned no work. Doesn't making a meal and cleaning up constitute work?

We consider that an extension of the festival. Everyone jumps in to help: our kids set the table, cut the vegetables, someone else cooks. Afterwards, we all clean up, do the dishes, and put everything away.

How has this lifestyle affected your marriage?

It's unbelievable! Before, I'd spend a little time in the evening with Rozanne, then I'd go back to work. Because I knew I was going back to work, I was often distracted in the time we were together.

Now that I don't go back to work in the evenings, I'm more relaxed, and we have a greater devotion to each other. We have the commitment to spend time together. We've never had that in our life before. But we do now because we created it.





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It's changed our priorities. Six to 10 P.M. is our destination. When we give ourselves this, not only are we fulfilling what God intended for us, but we're also making our life balanced, we get better sleep, and get more work done during the day.

For most of our 23 years of marriage, I lived with the notion that my work was the most important thing and that relationships recharged my work. But in reality God didn't create relationships to recharge work; he created me for relationships. We were created *to* work but we were created *for* relationships. When I'm with my mate in the evening, I've arrived at my destination.

This lifestyle sounds so wonderful! But honestly, how realistic is this? Especially when some people don't even get home from work until 6 o'clock!

I'll be honest—it was a challenge when we first started. I'm this Type A, hard-driving person, so it was difficult to shut that off. I doubt I could have been talked into trying it had I not hit a crisis in my life.

God created us with a work cycle. We can work six days from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. and take off one day. After 6 p.m. on those six days we need to enter into the relational season of the day and be replenished.

This is doable. But a couple has to sit down and make a list of the things they do on a routine basis—such as laundry, grocery shopping, or other house-related items. Then they need to ask, "When can we schedule these?" If a couple follows that schedule, they can actually have their evenings. Opt for doing things on Saturday that otherwise you'd do in the evening. Rozanne and I have a master list of things that need to be done, and we identify which ones are the priorities.





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I know people would say that's rigid. The thing they don't understand is I'm not a rigid person. I've had to put myself under a stricter environment in order to create balance in my life and marriage.

Ginger Kolbaba is managing editor of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

This article first appeared in the Fall 2005 issue of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

Reflect

- *In what way does stress or a too-hectic life interfere with your ability to sleep?*
- *Randy and his family made some radical changes in the way the family spent their day. What ways could you restructure your day to maximize relationships and rest and minimize stress?*



Keeping the Bed Bugs at Bay

5 tips to sleep tight.

By the editors of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN



According to the National Sleep Foundation, most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep each night. Not getting enough sleep has been linked to health problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, negative mood and behavior, and decreased productivity. Sounds like some good reasons to stay snuggled under the covers a bit longer!



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Keeping the Bed Bugs at Bay

Here are a few tips to help you establish and maintain good sleep habits:

1. **Go to bed** and get up at the same time every day.
2. **Establish** a regular, relaxing bedtime routine, such as soaking in a hot bath or listening to soothing music.
3. **Keep work** materials, computer, and television out of the sleeping environment.
4. **Finish eating** at least two to three hours before your regular bedtime.
5. **Exercise regularly**, but complete your workout at least three hours before your bedtime.

This article first appeared in the March/April 2005 issue of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

Reflect

- *How could you incorporate these suggestions into your daily life?*
- *If following these tips helps you sleep, is that motivation enough to stick with it or could you consider a sleep accountability partner?*



The Ministry of Sleep



Here's how getting enough sleep can make us better Christians.

By Lauren F. Winner

Last night, I pulled one of my very few all-nighters. These were not uncommon in my college years, but my capacity to stay up all night and be anything approximating coherent the next morning has declined as I've marched through my 20s. So now I stay up all night very rarely, once every two years or so, and only when I am truly desperate.



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But the storied all-nighters are just the most extreme example of something many of us do quite a lot: chip away at sleep in order to do something else. Usually that something else is work.

A simple glance at my email inbox tells me that I am not alone in sacrificing sleep to squeeze in a few more hours of work. Last Tuesday alone, I received 23 work-related emails that had been sent between 10:00 P.M. and 5:00 A.M. This creeped me out. The next night, in fact, I had some trouble falling asleep. I lay in bed worrying about the correspondence that was accumulating in my inbox, the possibly pressing matters I would need to address in the morning, and the number of hours the next morning that I would have to devote not to preparing to teach my afternoon class, but to replying to email. Eventually I rolled over and set my alarm back from 6:30 to 5:00, resolved to use the extra 90 minutes of wakefulness for email.

Wakefulness, actually, may not be the right word. For though I "gained" 90 minutes in which I was awake, I actually lost wakefulness. Sleep specialists are virtually unanimous on this: With some notable exceptions who seem wired to operate on a different schedule (Thomas Edison is a famous example), we human beings cannot lose sleep without decreasing our attention span, our response time, our acuity. I may have been awake for 90 extra minutes, but I was less wakeful all day long.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, the average adult sleeps six hours and 58 minutes per night during the workweek. One hundred years ago—before Mr. Edison's marvelous invention—people slept about nine hours a





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night. They were right in line with the eight to ten hours of sleep specialists say we need. Now we are a nation of the chronically sleep-deprived.

The irony is that although many of us trade sleep for productivity, we would actually be more productive if we slept more. When we don't get enough sleep, we accumulate "sleep debt" which has to be paid back. (It's no coincidence that we describe this state with a metaphor drawn from banking, one William Wordsworth nicely turned on its head when he asked, in his poem "To Sleep," "Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?") We concentrate better and are less easily distracted when well-rested. When we've gotten good sleep, we are also happier, nicer, and healthier. Michael Irwin, director of the Cousins Center of Psychoneuroimmunology at UCLA, says, "Even a modest disturbance of sleep produces a reduction of natural immune responses and [production of] T-cell[s]," the cells that combat the effects of viruses and other pathogens on our bodies.

Indeed, sleep deprivation carries great costs, both in dollars and in human life. Tragedies related to sleep deprivation—car wrecks, accidents at the workplace, and so forth—cost Americans more than \$50 billion a year, and result in at least 20,000 deaths. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says sleep deprivation causes 100,000 traffic accidents a year. Psychologist and sleep specialist Stanley Coren has suggested that the accidents at Chernobyl and Three Mile Island both occurred in part because sleepy employees, dragged down by sleep debt, were





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"not working at top efficiency and were not motivated to check details closely." According to Coren, sleep deprivation was also a factor in the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Faithful Sleep

When folks from my local church gather for an evening meal or adult education class, we usually close with Compline, the nighttime service from the Book of Common Prayer. This service—in which we pray for a peaceful night and a perfect end, repeating the *nunc dimittis* (originally uttered by Simeon in a somewhat different context, asking God to let his servant depart in peace)—is helping me to understand sleep as part of faithfulness. For it is sheer hypocrisy to pray with my community for a peaceful night and a perfect end if I know I am going home to put in three or four more hours answering email.

Sleep more: this may seem a curious thing that Christians can do for the common good. Surely one could come up with something more other-directed, more sacrificial, less self-serving. But for the moment I'll stick with the small, if challenging, task of becoming better rested. Not only does sleep have evident social consequences, not only would sleeping more make us better neighbors and friends and family members and citizens. Sleeping well may also be part of Christian discipleship, at least in our time and place.

The unarguable demands that our bodies make for sleep are a good reminder that we are mere creatures, not the Creator. For it is God and God alone who "neither slumbers nor sleeps." Of course, the Creator has slept,





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another startling reminder of the radical humility he embraced in becoming incarnate. He took on a body that, like ours, was finite and contingent and needed sleep. To push ourselves to go without sleep is, in some sense, to deny our embodiment, to deny our fragile incarnations—and perhaps to deny the magnanimous poverty and self-emptying that went into his Incarnation.

French poet Charles Peguy makes the point well:

I don't like the man who doesn't sleep,
says God.
Sleep is the friend of man,
Sleep is the friend of God.
Sleep is perhaps the most beautiful thing
I have created.
And I myself rested on the seventh day. ...
But they tell me that there are men
Who work well and sleep badly.
Who don't sleep. What a lack of
confidence in me.

Peguy's words have perhaps never been more fitting: to sleep, long and soundly, is to place our trust not in our own strength and hard work, but in him without whom we labor in vain.

Lauren F. Winner is the author most recently of Real Sex: The Naked Truth About Chastity (Brazos).

This article first appeared in the January/February 2006 issue of BOOKS AND CULTURE.





Reflect

- *How would getting more sleep make you a better Christian?*
- *In what ways does lack of sleep affect your mood or your interaction with others?*
- *Do you agree that when we choose work over sleep it reflects a lack of trust in God? How so?*



Sleep for Your Health



Tips on getting the sleep you need so you can be more balanced, physically and spiritually.

By Amy M. Tatum

Does finding the motivation, energy, and extra minutes in a day to stay healthy seem impossible in this spread-yourself-too-thin world? You're probably thinking, *How could I possibly have time to go to the gym between work, dinner, and my kids' soccer practice? And even if I had time, where would I start?*

According to Ruth McGinnis, author of *Living the Good Life* (Revell) and *Breathing Freely: Celebrating the Imperfect Life* (Revell), the first step toward healthy living doesn't require extra activities. Rather, start with the one thing we often lack more than anything: a good night's sleep.



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If you haven't been taking care of yourself, how on earth do you find the motivation to begin?

Ruth: First of all, nobody can motivate another person. You have to have that inner desire for a healthier life. But one motivation that works for almost everyone is fear—the fear of losing your range of motion, the fear of high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

When you're in your 40s, as I am, you start to realize maintenance is crucial. If you don't start maintaining the health you've already got, look out, because it doesn't get easier. Investing in your health isn't a luxury. Often I've found a woman with a husband and kids to care for feels guilty making that investment in herself. But when you start to lose muscle mass, gain weight, and feel tired all the time, you can't give something you don't have. Nobody benefits from a woman who doesn't take care of herself.

So how do you get started?

It's not easy, especially for women with small children and hectic lives. But the first big important step is getting enough sleep. Keeping regular sleeping hours is crucial, because the more disciplined things, such as eating right and exercising, are harder to implement if you're exhausted.

Go to bed at the same time every night and get up at about the same time every morning. That's a tried-and-true method for improving your sleep. The problem is, many of us get involved watching television, or suddenly have a spurt of energy to clean the kitchen at the end of the day. Those things distract the body from preparing itself for sleep. Look at the way you manage your hours, especially





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late in the day, and make wiser choices to help you get to bed earlier and to give yourself more time to wind down so you can sleep.

Any suggestions?

Turn off that television and computer! Artificial light from the computer stimulates your nervous system, so it makes it harder for you to fall asleep.

Some people take a bath or read; others turn down the phone ringer. Turn off bright lights, and lower the noise level even for 30 minutes.

Our culture expects us to run ourselves ragged on an inhuman schedule. Lots of truly exhausted people still have trouble falling asleep because their mind's still going. Maybe they've worked hard mentally but haven't exerted their body all day, which makes it tough to get a good night's sleep.

Many of us sit all day at work. How can we exert ourselves more?

You have to look for opportunities to move around. For example, if you work on the second floor, use the stairs instead of the elevator. One of the greatest exercises for your backside is to go up stairs two at a time. By lifting your leg that much higher, you really engage your rear-end muscles. Over a period of time, the difference between taking the stairs versus taking the elevator has a significant impact on how much muscle you use and how many calories you burn. Building and maintaining muscle mass, especially later in life, is extremely important.





A Worn-Out Woman's Guide to Good Sleep

Sleep for Your Health

Also, taking a 15-minute walk during your lunch hour or break time can have huge benefits. Even if you don't have time to change clothes and go to a gym, you still can accomplish something by just going out and walking. Grab a friend, and make it fun.

And plan on sleeping well that night!

Amy M. Tatum is a former assistant editor of TODAY'S CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

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Reflect

- *In what ways do you think not getting enough sleep has impacted your health?*
- *What changes could you make in your day—such as taking stairs instead of elevators or logging off earlier—to help you sleep better at night?*



Sleep in Heavenly Peace!



10 ways to reduce snoring.
By Sheila Wray Gregoire

- 1.** Don't eat within three hours of going to bed.
- 2.** Don't drink alcohol within several hours of going to bed.
- 3.** Lose weight. Even a few extra pounds increase your likelihood of snoring.
- 4.** Sleep on your side. Attach a tennis ball or a walnut to the back of your pajama shirt so you won't lie on your back.
- 5.** If you smoke, quit.
- 6.** Tilt the head of the bed up by about five inches to encourage breathing through your nose.



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7. Investigate drug store snoring remedies. Nostril dilators keep the nasal passages open. Peppermint throat sprays, such as SnorEnz, coat the back of the throat and discourage vibrations. While these won't work for everyone, some people use them with success.

8. See a physician. While most snoring is harmless, if you snore because of a medical condition called obstructive sleep apnea, you run the risk of serious health problems.

9. Ask about plastic mouth devices, called mandibular advancement splints, to hold the jaw forward when you sleep to prevent the vibrations. Some dentists and most orthodontists can fit you for them.

10. As a last resort, consider surgery. It may have negative side effects, so try everything else first, and then talk to your physician about how you should proceed.

Sheila Wray Gregoire is a freelance writer who lives in Canada with her family—all snorers.

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Reflect

- *What role does snoring play in your household?*
- *Have you ever considered snoring hazardous to your health or considered consulting a doctor about the problem?*



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