



Tips for Better Sleep: & Improve Work Productivity



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Employees are paying a high price for too little sleep when it comes to work productivity, according to new statistics from the Better Sleep Council (BSC). Respondents to the BSC's 2007 Better Sleep Month survey, conducted for Better Sleep Month this May, reported an alarming decline in quality of work, poor judgment and trouble retaining information as the top work-related consequences from lack of sleep. In fact, 44% said they were likely to be in an unpleasant or unfriendly mood - all bad news for employers, employees and customers.

"Some believe you can accomplish more if you spend less time sleeping, but limited sleep can affect every aspect of your life, including job performance," said Dr. Bert Jacobson, Better Sleep Month spokesperson. "In fact, sleep deprivation impacts your level of alertness, your productivity and your ability to socially interact with colleagues."

Studies estimate that sleep deprivation currently costs U.S. businesses nearly \$150 billion annually in absenteeism and lost productivity. And Better Sleep Month survey respondents reported sleep deprivation impaired their quality and accuracy of work (31%), clear thinking or judgment (31%) and memory of important details (30%).

Survey results also uncovered that tired employees are turning instead to quick-fix performance enhancers to remedy their sleep deficiency problem, including

- Drinking coffee or other caffeinated drinks (33%)
- Taking a nap (17%)
- Going outside for fresh air (18%)

Only 13% of Americans are willing to make the commitment to get more sleep in order to feel more awake and productive at work.

Tips to Improve Sleep and Work Productivity

As new Oklahoma State University research points out, and as reported in Fortune (May), a new mattress significantly impacts the quality of your sleep; further suggesting that consumers should regularly evaluate their mattresses for sufficient comfort and support.

To get the sleep you need for a happier, healthier and more productive life, BSC recommends the following:

1. **Pay your sleep debt.** Getting even 30 minutes less sleep than your body needs can lead to accumulated sleep debt, which has both short- and long-term consequences for health, mood and performance, both on and off the job. It's important to schedule 8 hours of sleep each night (7.5 to 8.5 is optimal) and maintain a regular sleep and wake schedule, even on the weekend.
2. **Performance evaluation.** Though your mattress may not show physical signs of wear, it loses comfort and support over the years. It's important to evaluate your mattress every five to seven years to ensure it still provides optimal comfort and support. Research shows that the age of a mattress directly impacts the quality of sleep.
3. **Bedroom business.** Use your bedroom for its intended purposes only. The bedroom should be an uncluttered environment that relaxing, comfortable and conducive to sleep and relaxation. Keep work, computers and televisions out of the bedroom.
4. **Kick the caffeine habit.** Research shows that caffeine interferes with getting a restful night's sleep and waking refreshed in the morning. Avoid tea, coffee and soft drinks close to bedtime. Limit alcohol.
5. **Make the investment.** You spend 1/3 of your life in bed. Be sure to invest in the best quality and most comfortable mattress you can afford to ensure a great night's rest for a healthier, happier and more productive you.
6. **Exercise regularly,** but complete workouts at least two hours before bedtime.
7. **Finish eating** at least 2-3 hours before bedtime.

This article is from the Better Sleep Council.