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There is practically no chance that you can function successfully in today’s world if you aren’t getting healthy sleep. You may function in some way, but probably to the detriment of yourself or someone else. Sure, there will be times when “burning the midnight oil” is necessary during times of crises or when surges in effort are required to accomplish an important task or mission, but sustaining this pace for long periods of time decreases the effectiveness of leaders, managers, and professionals alike. And not getting enough quality sleep can also lead to a variety of health issues to include obesity, diabetes, inflammation, depression, Parkinson’s disease, and Alzheimer’s.

If you’re finding it difficult to get enough healthy sleep, then this column contains information that may have a positive impact on your life. Diane Fulton, an emeritus professor at Clayton State University and an expert in body, mindfulness, and cross-cultural awareness, offers these six tips for healthier sleep:

1) *Acupressure*. In a study of 36 participants with an average age of 32, those using acupressure increased sleep quality scores by 26 percent. And in another comprehensive research project, both sleep quality and quality of life were improved for 62 nursing home residents who used acupressure to treat sleep deprivation conditions.

2) *Aromatherapy*. In a meta-analysis of 12 studies, aromatherapy effectively improved sleep quality. Lavender

oil helped with insomnia. In a study of 57 menopausal women, lavender aromatherapy increased their sleep quality and quality of life. In a trial of 15 healthy Japanese students, lavender produced less sleepiness upon waking compared to no lavender.

Three groups of 120 cancer patients received lavender, peppermint, or a placebo, and the essential oil groups had higher sleep quality scores than the control group. Chamomile treatment significantly improved sleep quality and general anxiety disorders.

3) *Melatonin*. Taking melatonin lowered the time to fall asleep and increased total sleep time in an analysis of 205 patients, and is recommended for secondary sleep disorders caused by depression, thyroid problems, stroke, arthritis, or asthma. Meta-analysis of five trials of 91 adults and four trials of 226 children showed that melatonin treatment improved the body’s ability to realign the sleep-wake rhythms and decreased time to fall asleep. (Note: Darkness prompts the pineal gland to start producing melatonin while light causes that production to stop. As a result, melatonin onset helps regulate circadian rhythm and synchronize our sleep-wake cycle with night and day.)

4) *Yoga/Exercise*. Nineteen studies of 1,832 participants were meta-analyzed and showed that yoga significantly improved sleep overall. In a study of 413 non-exercisers/non-meditators, exercise significantly improved sleep quality and mediation decreased daytime sleepiness. In 43 adults ages 56 to 73 with moderate sleep complaints, moderate exercise

increased the quality of sleep scores. Tai chi also improved sleep quality.

5) *Relaxation/Meditation*. A review of 37 treatment studies based on treating insomnia with psychological and behavioral therapies found relaxation produced improvements in sleep quality ratings as well as 20- to 30-minute improvements in self-reported sleep onset latency, wake time after sleep onset, and total sleep time. Another study found mindfulness meditation effectively reduced insomnia.

6) *Eliminate Blue Light*. In a study of 22 participants, the use of blue light smartphone devices two hours before bedtime significantly decreased sleepiness and performance. Blue light use increased the time to reach melatonin onset by 50 percent, which negatively impacted overall sleep quality. Smartphone exposure may cause sleep disorders, headaches, and heart rate variability.

In a study of 28 people, those with sleep issues had late circadian rhythms, slow build-ups of sleep need, and increased circadian sensitivity to blue light. In a study of 30 healthy young participants, two hours of intense evening blue light hurt sleep regulation and quality.

Sleep quality is essential for your health. Those who master it have a significant advantage over those who are deprived of it. If you’re suffering, talk to your doctor about options mentioned herein. For more information about sleep disorders and possible treatments, go to: www.GreenMedInfo.com.

Sleep well my friends.

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