[IMAGE]

Poor Sleep Is Hurting You, But More Exercise May Counter It

By Editorial Staff

Most of us need more sleep these days, pure and simple. If we don't it, we suffer short- and long-term health consequences that are increasingly being revealed. Of course, getting a good night's sleep (one night, some nights, most nights or every night) isn't nearly as easy as it's supposed to be; thus the sleep-deprivation epidemic we referenced above. Perhaps upping our exercise can do the trick.

Yes, exercise doesn't just help us fall asleep (as long as we don't do it right before bedtime); high levels of physical activity may counter the health harms attributable to poor sleep. People who reported high levels of weekly physical activity (approximately 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity) and healthy sleep scores (determined via self-reported factors such as sleep duration, insomnia, snoring and daytime sleepiness) were significantly less likely to die of any cause during the study period compared to people at the opposite end of the scale: no moderate / vigorous weekly activity and poor sleep scores.

These findings aren't an invitation to embrace chronic poor sleep and attempt to counter it by going crazy at the gym. After all, if you're a poor sleeper, you're probably going to be too tired to spend all day exercising intensely. It's also important to note that numerous other variables impacted sleep scores, including age, weight, eating habits, daytime activity (seated vs. standing), smoking status and alcohol consumption.

In other words, good sleep and consistent exercise are two keys to a healthy life! If you're struggling to do one (or both) on a regular basis, talk to your doctor about the best ways to turn things around. A good day of exercise, a good night's sleep: now that's a win-win for lifelong health we all deserve.

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