

[IMAGE]

Here's What One Night of Missed Sleep Can Do

By Editorial Staff

We're learning more about sleep every day – or more appropriately, more about how few people seem to get enough of it, the right kind of it (uninterrupted, relaxing and restorative); and the myriad health consequences associated with long-term inadequacy in either of these aspects. New research suggests trouble with your gait (manner of walking) could even be related to poor sleep habits.

The study, published in *Scientific Reports*, evaluated college students (notorious for their poor sleep habits) who wore sleep trackers for 14 days to record data on sleep vs. waking time. On average, students sleep six hours per night during the study period. Some students were considered chronically sleep restricted; however, some appeared to compensate for lost sleep time by sleeping more on the weekends. The researchers observed "a consistent mild sleep restriction and bad sleep quality for most participants, in agreement with previous literature about college students and sleep." A third of the students were told to skip an entire night of sleep on day 13 and were labeled the acute deprivation group.

sprained ankle - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark On day 14, when all students performed a treadmill test that required them to keep step with the beat of a metronome, the acute sleep-deprived students fared worse than their chronically sleep-restricted colleagues, committing more errors when attempting to synchronize their heel strike (steps) to the beat (missed auditory cues, early or late steps, etc.). Students who compensated for lost sleep time on the weekends also performed better on the treadmill task compared to those who were acutely sleep deprived.

Results suggest both that acute sleep deprivation can negatively impact gait, and that compensating for sleep restriction can help retain proper gait. Your doctor can tell you more about how sleep can impact your health and offer tips for ensuring a good night's sleep.

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