

Simple solutions for trouble sleeping

By **Hanna Brooks Olsen**, **Huffington Post**

You don't have to be one of the 70 million Americans who suffer from a sleep disorder to wish for ways to sleep better. Between heavy work loads that keep many of us up late, the lure of late-night TV and our social lives, we may skimp on shut-eye – and then wonder why we're tossing and turning when we finally do hit the sack. This week is National Sleep Awareness Week, so let's take this opportunity to be aware of why exactly a good night's rest is so important – and learn some non-drug-related ways to sleep better.

Insomnia and sleep disorders don't just mean you can't fall asleep – they can also impact your quality of sleep. Even if you sleep a full seven or eight hours, if your sleep quality is low (i.e., not enough deep, restful sleep), your body does all kinds of wonky things that basically make it hard to exist. Aside from a lack of concentration, too little REM time may actually make you more prone to cancer, heart disease and diabetes. It also leads to poor job performance, mood disorders and can trigger depression. Plus, there's research that shows crappy or insufficient sleep may also lead to weight gain, as tired folks try to eat more to wake up.

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