



THE WHALE WATCH

"Looking Out for Yourself and Others"

March 2019 | Issue 3

In This Issue

- Better Sleep Hygiene
- Setting Sleep Protocols
- What to avoid: tips on getting a good night's sleep
- Forgetting the 'magic number'

What does Sheldon have to say about sleep?

[Sheldon on no sleep](#)

When you're halfway through a book and come to a plot twist at 1 am



I don't need sleep. I need answers.

We All Need Sleep...

We tend to think of sleep as a time when the mind and body shut down. But this is not the case; sleep is an active period in which a lot of important processing, restoration, and strengthening occurs. Exactly how this happens and why our bodies are programmed for such a long period of slumber is still somewhat of a mystery. But scientists do understand some of sleep's critical functions, and the reasons we need it for optimal health and well being.

One of the vital roles of sleep is to help us solidify and consolidate memories. As we go about our day, our brains take in an incredible amount of information. Rather than being directly logged and recorded, however, these facts and experiences first need to be processed and stored; and many of these steps happen while we sleep.

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/why-do-we-need-sleep>

Better Sleep Hygiene



We hope you enjoyed this third issue of “The Whale Watch”. Our goal is for you to benefit from the information provided in this periodic newsletter based on our four foundational elements of growth mindset, state of being, social being, and stress response.

***Did you know...**we develop our outreach programming specific to student needs relative to the NEOMED student community. We do this through special event planning, speakers, lunch workshops, emails, newsletters, and other informational resources.*

- **Limit your time in bed:** while it’s important to engage in relaxation as bedtime approaches, do not get into bed until you are sleepy to better condition the body to sleep in that environment.
- **Don’t read, text, scroll or Netflix in bed:** Engaging in stimulating activities triggers your body to be okay with being awake in bed. Do these activities in other areas of your home prior to getting into bed.
- **Create a sleep protocol:** set a regular schedule and try to stick to the schedule regardless of events. Utilize calming rituals such as brushing your teeth, dressing for bed, prayer, meditation, etc. Make your bed as comfortable as possible.
- **Don’t watch the clock:** reminding yourself of how much (or little) time you have to sleep increases anxious thoughts, which makes it difficult to get to sleep.
- **Avoid caffeine:** you knew this was coming. Caffeine can take 3 to 10 hours to be metabolized in your system, so it can make it difficult to fall asleep OR cause you to wake up throughout the night. It’s best to limit caffeine to before noon.
- **A word about exercise:** The best time to exercise for sleep is 4 to 5 hours before your anticipated bedtime. You’re most likely to fall asleep when your body temperature is dropping, and since exercise increases your body temperature it’s best to space it out before bedtime.
- **Booze won’t help you snooze:** Although alcohol can help someone falls asleep earlier, it tends to increase NREM sleep and reduce REM sleep in the first hours of falling asleep. This can mean frequent waking, increase nightmares, increased heart rate, and sweating.
- **Forget about the magic number:** There is no number of hours of sleep that fits EVERYONE. Focus on how



you feel during the day after a “good” night of sleep versus a “bad” night of sleep, and then compare numbers of hours slept. The good nights probably mimic your needed hours of sleep.

Silberman, S. (2009). *The insomnia workbook: A comprehensive guide to getting the sleep you need*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

www.behavioraltech.org; psychologytools.com

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