

“Sleep is the golden chain that binds health and the body together.”

- Thomas Dekker (English playwright, 1572-1632)

Rejuvenating Sleep: A Necessity of Life

For most adults, the amount of sleep needed for a sound mind and healthy body is seven to eight hours each night. The deep uninterrupted sleep, called rejuvenating sleep, is as vital for health as is good nourishing food and water. Sleep is the precious time during which the body rests, repairs, and recharges itself for the challenges of the next day. Humans spend one-third of their life sleeping (7-8 hours out of the 24-hour day), and nature designed that for a good reason. Rejuvenating sleep is the ultimate performance enhancer for every pursuit in life, whether it is intellectual, athletic, artistic, or creative. Despite this knowledge, many individuals fall into the trap of depriving themselves of sleep. They spend countless hours awake to get ahead in the competitive maze set up by the modern economic and digital revolution. Sleep deprivation is a great epidemic of current times. It is marching toe to toe with the epidemics of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer because all these are interconnected.

The prevailing culture in modern urban societies is that sleep time is equivalent to wasted time. Ungodly hours of work and late-night social activities have become a badge of honor for college students and corporate hustlers. A prerequisite to good work ethics in many corporations is synonymous with the employee staying connected to the work digitally 24/7. Working 18-hour days in the corporate world has become a new normal. The science, however, clearly shows that sleep deprivation ultimately leads to loss of productivity and creativity. ***“Presenteeism”*** is the new term coined for this phenomenon. It means that the employee is present at work physically but accomplishing less than his/her real potential. The corporate world is slowly catching up to this knowledge and will hopefully institute the culture of work-life balance.

The global community has to be made aware that the new culture of sleep deprivation, celebrated by the young generation and perpetuated by the business community, threatens health, productivity, and the economic progress of the society as a whole. Long-term sleep deprivation ultimately traps an individual into the disease state of sleeplessness called insomnia. The three significant reasons for the current epidemic of sleep deprivation and insomnia amongst the city dwellers are:

1. ***Sleep deprivation from a reduced opportunity for sleep.*** That could be either deliberate self-imposed or work-imposed. The ultimate consequence of sleep deprivation is the disease state of insomnia.
2. ***Inability to sleep or insomnia.*** The most common reason is stress, anxiety, and fear originating from work, family, or social situations. The individual is desperate for sleep, but it is not in his/her reach.
3. ***An unbalanced lifestyle.*** The habits and behaviors which disrupt healthy sleep, such as frequent late-night socializing, late eating after 8 PM and late morning wake up.

There are several medical reasons for insomnia, which will not be discussed here because these may require specific therapeutic interventions. This discussion will focus on the current epidemic of sleep deprivation and insomnia resulting from human behaviors, which run against nature's norm. That accounts for most cases of insomnia currently afflicting the urban population.

The great news is that awareness and knowledge of the cause in itself will help to formulate the strategies of insomnia cure. The enduring wisdom in medicine states:

“In medicine, we ought to know the cause of disease to be able to find an effective cure and prevention.” – Avicenna (Persian physician, 980-1037)

In keeping with this enduring wisdom, the present discussion will focus on:

- **Sleep deprivation versus insomnia: Know the difference**
- **Common insomnia types affecting urban population**
- **Science of natural sleep and how sleep gets disrupted**
- **Natural sleep cycle and how it relates to the rejuvenating sleep**
- **Natural solutions to overcome sleep deprivation and common insomnia disorders**