HEALTH

MAKING SLEEP HEALTH A PRIORITY
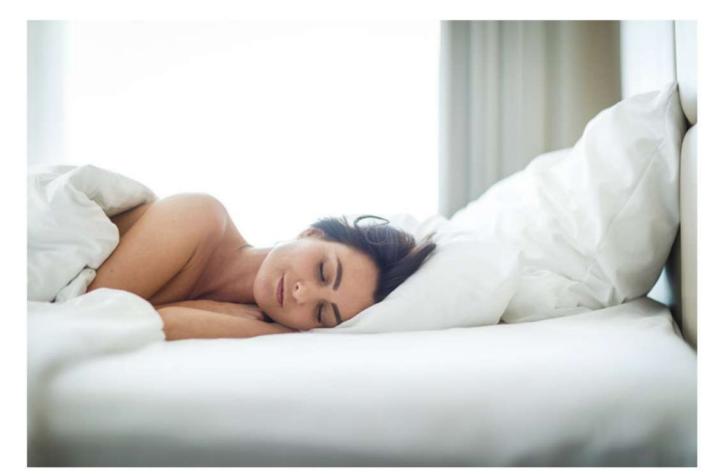
Mar/13/2025 / by Rashmi Gopal Rao

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Come March 14 and it is World Sleep Day, a day instituted to recognize the importance of sleep and its role in one's overall health and well-being.   The theme for Sleep Day 2025 is "*Make Sleep Health a Priority*" which is indeed apt and much relevant in today's hectic and notification driven world. "*Sleep plays a key role in our physical and mental health. In terms of psychology, sleep does more than just give us a break from our daily lives; it has a significant impact on resetting our minds. As we sleep, our brains process emotions, cements memories and controls stress. When we do not enough rest, we feel tired, our emotions pile up, making it hard to think clearly, make decisions, and stay cool under pressure*" says Dr. Malini Saba, Psychologist, human and social rights activist and founder of the Anannke Foundation.

QUALITY SLEEP: A KEY

It is important to note that good sleep is critical for good health and hence it is important to make the same a priority. "*Sleep is not merely a state of rest but a fundamental biological process essential for optimal physical and mental functioning. For adults, consistent 7–9 hours of quality sleep supports immune function, helping the body ward off infections and recover from illness. Sleep deprivation, even short-term, can impair cognitive abilities including attention, decision-making, and creative problem-solving*" says Dr Chandni Tugnait, MD (A.M) Psychotherapist, Founder & Director, Gateway of Healing.

She further adds that adequate sleep regulates hunger hormones and metabolism. "*Those who regularly shortchange their sleep face higher risks of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Modern lifestyle challenges—screen time, irregular schedules, and stress have made quality sleep increasingly elusive. Creating a sleep-supportive environment with consistent bedtimes, reduced evening screen exposure, and a cool, dark bedroom can significantly improve sleep quality.Making sleep a priority is not self-indulgent but an essential investment in health, productivity, and overall quality of life—one that pays dividends in nearly every aspect of daily functioning*" adds Dr Chandni Tugnait.

DEVELOPING GOOD SLEEPING HABITS

There are several simple ways to cultivate good sleeping habits. "*Establishing a work-life boundary is very important. The urge to check emails or browse messages at night persists, but implementing a deadline for screens and tasks allows your brain to decelerate*" adds Dr. Malini Saba. Activities like reading, writing in a journal, or even doing some light stretches tell your body that it is time to unwind and rest. "*Instead of allowing thoughts race in your mind as you lie in bed, dedicate ten minutes before bedtime to write down any concerns, tasks, or ideas in a dedicated notebook.This acts as a cognitive offloading technique, allowing your mind to release these thoughts rather than cycling through them during sleep hours*" adds Dr Chandni Tugnait.   Multisensory cues are also helpful to the body. For example, this might include a specific essential oil scent used only at bedtime, a particular piece of calming music, or a gentle self-massage routine. Consistent use of such techniques creates powerful associations that help your brain transition to sleep mode.

Dr. Chandni Tugnait adds that a 60-minute buffer between daytime activities and sleep is ideal. Begin with 20 minutes of completing final productive tasks, followed by 20 minutes of hygiene routines, and end with 20 minutes of relaxation techniques. Dr. Malini Saba further mentions that practicing calming methods is extremely helpful. "*Deep breathing, meditation, or even listening to soothing music can help quieten an active mind and prepare it for restful sleep.The key lies in regularity. Once you establish a routine that suits you, sleep transforms from a challenge into something you achieve*" adds Dr. Malini Saba.

SLEEP: AN ACT OF SELF CARE

Sleep is far more than a biological necessity; it is an act of self-care and restoration that touches every dimension of one's being. "*When we sleep well, we create space for healing, not just physically but emotionally and mentally as well. One of the most remarkable aspects of sleep is its ability to foster creativity and insight. During the deeper stages of sleep, the mind processes experiences, emotions, and challenges, often leading to breakthroughs or newfound clarity upon waking. This is why many people find that a good night's sleep brings fresh perspectives to problems that once felt insurmountable*" adds Dr Chandni Tugnait. Sleep also has a subtle yet powerful influence on how we connect with others. When we are well-rested, we are more present, empathetic, and attuned to the people around us. Conversely, sleep deprivation can leave us irritable, withdrawn, and less capable of nurturing meaningful relationships. "*Beyond this, sleep plays a vital role in regulating our inner balance, from hormonal harmony to emotional resilience.In a world that often prioritizes productivity over rest, embracing the transformative power of sleep is an act of reclaiming wholeness. It is a reminder that true well-being begins with honoring our need for rest*" concludes Dr Chandni Tugnait.

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