

## LEADERSHIP SLEEPING EFFECTIVENESS

**You are probably sleep deprived.** If so, you are operating far below your potential. Sleep Deprivation is a ticking time bomb. Increasing the amount of sleep can improve our health, relaxation, relationships and productivity. If sleep deprivation is severe it can actually be dangerous. Signs of sleep deprivation<sup>i</sup> include:

- Needing an alarm clock to wake up in the morning
- Feeling tired, irritable and stressed during the week
- Losing optimal coping skills
- Having trouble concentrating at times
- Lapses of short term memory
- Feeling drowsy while driving a car
- Get sleepy in boring meetings
- Getting sleepy after a big lunch
- Falling asleep within fifteen minutes of your head hitting the pillow at night

If you have any of the above signs, you probably need at least one more hour of sleep each night. Significant studies of sleep and its impact on performance are startling. Unfortunately most business people have learned to live on a minimum of sleep and are so used to being sleep deprived that it seems normal. It is not normal, it is not healthy and it is not productive.

The vast majority of business people today are sleep deprived. As a result, the typical executive has the alertness at 2:00 p.m. equal to that of an 80 year old man. A recent study<sup>ii</sup> found that you could increase your alertness by 25% by adding one hour of sleep per night.

In addition to being more alert, there are significant benefits to being well rested. Virus protection (against flu and colds) goes way down with inadequate sleep; our memory capacity drops and the ability to learn new things decreases significantly; our ability to cope with stress and relationships drops while patience and attention to task can become almost non-existent. Jet lag is a bigger problem for those with sleep deprivation.

Far from sleep being a waste of time as many (including myself) thought, **increased sleep may be the most powerful adjustment we can make to overall effectiveness and leadership.** It is as important to overall health and well being as exercise and good nutrition. It's great to know that something that feels as wonderful as a good night's sleep can be so beneficial!

People used to average ten hours of sleep each night before the invention of the light bulb. Now many business people average six hours of sleep which is far from enough. Some people even average less, which is considered very dangerous for many reasons. Current studies indicate that top performance is achieved with ten hours of sleep every night. Most people can't imagine sleeping that much on an ongoing basis. It turns out that eight hours of sleep is significantly better than seven hours of sleep.

Contrary to past beliefs, sleep is a very active state for the body. Sleep goes through major cycles at night and each phase has different purposes. REM sleep is the most restorative to the part of us that is creative and able to handle stress, learn and be productive. The mind does such things as organizing and storing short term information in long-term memory during REM sleep. Eight hours of sleep dramatically increases the REM sleep we experience. Almost all of the eighth hour of sleep is REM sleep.

If you sleep seven hours rather than eight hours you lose almost half of your REM sleep. For example:

<b>Total Sleep</b>	5 hours	6 hours	7 hours	8 hours
<b>REM Sleep</b>	15 minutes	45 minutes	70 minutes	120 minutes

---

**Specific actions you can take to make a difference in effectiveness are:**

1. **Establish a regular sleep schedule** 7 days per week. For example: Lights out at 10:30 p.m. and sleep until 6:30 a.m. every day. Do not oversleep on the weekends because that throws off your sleep cycle (particularly on Sunday mornings). If you wish to catch up after a tough week of less sleep, go to bed earlier, but get up at the same time.
2. **Take a half hour nap.** Short napping is restorative and doesn't throw off your normal sleep pattern. Longer naps do disturb sleep patterns. A three hour nap on a Sunday will likely result in a poor night's sleep Sunday night, leaving you tired on Monday. On the other hand, taking a longer nap before a late night is very helpful and helps the cycle (3 hours on Saturday afternoon when you will be up until 1:00 a.m. for example). Naps are included in the total sleep calculations; so if you get a three hour nap Saturday and five hours sleep Saturday night, you have your total of eight hours sleep.
3. **6 hours before bedtime:** Avoid caffeine and chocolate. 4 hours before bedtime: avoid exercise, alcohol, spicy meals and heavy meals.
4. **To help you sleep better:** Exercise, maintain a good diet, stop smoking (if you do smoke), take warm baths (100° F), engage in pleasurable sex, clear your mind, eliminate distractions (noises, light, pets in room) and have a bedtime ritual (reading a relaxing book). Keep the room temperature at 65° and avoid blankets that make you perspire. Invest in a good mattress and pillow. Use the bedroom just for sleep. It should be calming for you. Avoid distractions in the bedroom like stacks of bills. Sleeping pills should only be used in special situations for short periods of time.
5. **If you have trouble sleeping** get up and do something relaxing in low light (such as read a relaxing book) until you feel sleepy again. Don't worry about it. It is normal to have periodic problems sleeping. If you have a persistent problem (over two weeks), see a sleep specialist.

**Jet lag is more than being tired from travel.**

Jet lag is a disruption of the natural rhythms of the body clock. Traveling more than three time zones is when it is most noticeable. Symptoms of being sleepy during the day and insomnia at night are common. Most people report trouble concentrating, digestive problems, headaches and changes in the effectiveness of medications.

**There are a number of factors that impact jet lag:**

1. East bound flights create more severe jet lag.
2. Those with sleep deprivation have significantly more trouble.
3. Early morning risers have more trouble than "night owls."
4. Those that exercise regularly have less trouble.
5. Those that prepare for jet lag fare much better.

**Strategies for combating jet lag:**

1. Schedule flights that allow you a full night's sleep before you leave and a full night's sleep after you arrive.
2. Start adjusting your biological clock five days before leaving. Flying east: start going to bed earlier. Flying west: go to bed later and get up later. Be sure to be well rested before your trip.
3. Select a seat away from noise and sunny windows. An empty row of seats can make a quasi-bed. Wear comfortable clothing. Bring a bag with eye shades, ear plugs, gum, moisturizer, lip balm, nasal spray, an antihistamine and a bottle of water.
4. On the flight, get a pillow and blanket early. Change your watch to the new zone immediately. Drink lots of water and juice and avoid alcohol and caffeine. Walk the aisles frequently to stimulate blood circulation. Do periodic stretching and deep breathing. It's better to remove contact lenses on long flights. Eat and sleep on the new time zone schedule. Consider taking an antihistamine to induce sleep. At 7:00 a.m. local time at your destination, force yourself to

---

be awake if you are on a night flight. There are light visors available that help you simulate daytime in the new time zone.<sup>iii</sup>

5. Some hotels offer special rooms with sound proofing and sleep inducing snacks for jet lag guests. Obtain a quiet room - typically high above street noise and away from elevators, ice machines, etc. Travel with earplugs. Ask for a room with a sunrise view. Consider packing your own special pillow. Take a night light with you to plug in. It will allow you to get up at night without turning on bright lights which makes going back to sleep easier. Keep the room at 65° and put out the “do not disturb” sign. Set an alarm and a wakeup call just to be sure. Ask the operator to hold all calls.
6. Day one at your destination you need to operate on the destination time table. If you arrive early in the day, it is better to push through the first day without a nap and go to bed exhausted early in the evening. Get outside in the sunlight - it helps regulate our natural clock. Getting some exercise helps on many levels - a brisk walk outside is very valuable.
7. Five hour time shifts impair judgment enough that it is wise to avoid decisions until the second day at the destination. Negotiations will suffer and mistakes will be made on the first day.
8. If you have the opportunity to make stops along the way to reduce the number of time zones crossed at one time, the body will adjust more smoothly.

Sleep disorders became a recognized medical specialty in 1996. Most doctors are uninformed about the impact of sleep and sleep disorders. There are now books, videos, speakers and web sites that provide more information. Power Sleep is a good book (listed below) for a better understanding. In addition to the impact sleep has on you individually, there are important considerations for entire companies on how to deal with sleep to improve effectiveness and quality. Bottom line: appropriate amounts of sleep will improve your bottom line. Visit the reference section at [www.changemasters.com](http://www.changemasters.com) for additional information.

© Change Masters® Incorporated, 1998

1

---

<sup>i</sup> Dr. James B. Maas, Power Sleep, Villard, New York, 1998

<sup>ii</sup> Dr. Thomas Roth, Henry Ford Hospital’s Sleep Disorders and Research Center in Detroit.

<sup>iii</sup> Bio-Brite Light Visor, from SunBox® Company, 19217 Orbit Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20879