



Timely Information for Personal Success

Lack of Sleep is Nothing to Yawn About

By Mike Jacquart

I've been reading a lot of posts lately about sleep ... or more specifically, the lack of it for many of us. Some people don't think "sleep" is a serious problem. I beg to differ.

The Institute for Health and Productivity Management (<https://www.ihpm.org/>) lists failure to address sleep as a major health and performance issue, although they are hardly alone in pointing this out. According to the National Sleep Foundation (<https://sleepfoundation.org>) about 20% of Americans report that they get less than 6 hours of sleep on average, and the number of Americans that report that they get 8 hours or more has decreased.

The Effects of Not Getting Enough Sleep

Major studies and Sleep in America polls (<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-polls>) have linked sleep deficits with poor work performance, driving accidents, relationship problems, and mood problems like anger and depression. Heart disease, diabetes, and other health conditions have also been traced to chronic sleep loss.

Today's go-go, 24/7 society, with its endless stream of electronic stimulation, plus busy work and parenting schedules, and bad lifestyle habits like too much caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine are all to blame.

Talk to Your Doctor!

Doctors point out that sleep is just as important to overall health as diet and exercise, and yet many people

don't like to talk to their physicians about sleep issues because they just assume that hardly anyone gets enough sleep, so why bother to mention it?

If a lack of sleep is interfering with your work or personal life, you *should* bring it up! Insomnia, sleep apnea, and other health conditions could be at the root of the problem. It's worth investigating because in such instances, medical treatment can help a great deal.

But in other cases, whether they realize it or not, people make more of a voluntary decision to not get enough rest... "I'm too busy with work to sleep that much," some think.

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Healthy Recipe: Black Bean Quesadillas

INGREDIENTS:

- One 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 1/2 cup shredded Pepper Jack cheese
- 1/2 cup prepared fresh salsa, divided
- Four 8-inch whole-wheat tortillas
- 2 teaspoons canola oil, divided
- 1 ripe avocado, diced

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 377
- Carbohydrates: 46 g.
- Protein: 13 g.
- Sodium: 679 mg.
- Fat: 13 g.
- Saturated fat: 5 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Combine beans, cheese and 1/4 cup salsa in a medium bowl. Place tortillas on a work surface. Spread 1/2 cup filling on half of each tortilla. Fold tortillas in half, pressing gently to flatten.
- 2 Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add 2 quesadillas and cook, turning once, until golden on both sides, 2 to 4 minutes total.
- 3 Transfer to a cutting board and tent with foil to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining 1 teaspoon oil and quesadillas. Serve the quesadillas with avocado and the remaining salsa.

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Questions and Answers

The Cell Phone Problem

Q: *My co-worker, Jane, sits in a cubicle next to mine, and she has her cell phone on all the time, when she should be working! What can I do?*

A: I'm assuming you talked to Jane about this problem and that didn't get you anywhere? Regardless, you need to speak to your supervisor about this problem. This isn't "tattling," it's recognizing that there needs to be a policy in place regarding cell phone use, because chances are if Jane is abusing their use, it's a good bet that she isn't the only colleague doing this. Many workplaces have a policy in place in which cell phones are either banned completely, or they are only allowed on breaks and lunch hours. Your workplace needs to get with the times and devise one or there will be a LOT more unhappy employees.

Lack of Sleep...

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Why Suffer?

Doesn't it make more sense to wake up at least reasonably refreshed and get more done in your day, than to not get enough sleep night after night, and slog through the day with little to show for it? Now I don't profess to get enough sleep *all of the time* – do any of us? Rather, I'm referring to a lack of sleep night after night after night.



Summary

All I know for sure is that sleep is something I need to take seriously, or suffer the consequences of being lethargic, cranky, or worse! Why would I want to feel like that day in, and day out? When you think about it, sleep is really a quality of life issue. I, for one, think that makes sleep deprivation a very bad idea. ■

Mike Jacquart is the editor of "Employee Assistance Report," the "Journal of Employee Assistance", and a frequent blogger and LinkedIn contributor.