

# VitaMin



## Vital health information in a minute

### Be your best with better sleep

Getting a good night's sleep can make a positive difference in many areas of your life and health – from mental alertness and memory to heart health and fighting off the common cold. You might be surprised by all of the benefits of sleep.

**Sleep on it.** Have a problem to solve or decision to make? There's some evidence that "sleeping on it" really helps. A small study suggests that a full night's sleep can improve your thinking skills, such as decision-making.<sup>1</sup>

**Take the edge off.** When you're tired, your body may be more sensitive to pain. How to fix it? Get more sleep. One study showed that mildly sleep-deprived people had less pain sensitivity during the day when they increased their sleep time at night.<sup>2</sup>

**Finish strong.** Research suggests that increasing sleeping time can improve athletic performance.<sup>3</sup>

**Snooze to lose.** Getting the rest you need may help your diet and exercise efforts. Dieters in a sleep-lab study who were well rested lost more fat than those who were sleep deprived. When dieters got less sleep, they felt hungrier during the day.<sup>4</sup>

**Give your skin a healthy glow.** Deep sleep is the prime time for the skin to repair itself. In a clinical trial, those who

had good-quality sleep had quicker recovery from stressors to skin, such as environmental toxins and sun damage. Poor sleepers had increased signs of skin aging.<sup>5</sup>

Set the stage for sound sleep

- ▶ Exercise during the day. It can make your body feel relaxed and tired come nighttime.
- ▶ Avoid cigarettes. Nicotine can cause sleeplessness and shallow sleeping.
- ▶ Cut out caffeine after your evening meal.
- ▶ Hide clocks. After setting your alarm, turn the clock away to avoid the stress of watching each minute pass by.
- ▶ Don't read or do work in bed.
- ▶ Stay away from things that upset you before bedtime.
- ▶ Try aromatherapy. Breathing in scents from lavender and other essential oils may help you relax and sleep at night.

### Sources:

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2. Roehrs TA; Harris E; Randall S; Roth T. "Pain sensitivity and recovery from mild chronic sleep loss." Sleep Journal. 2012. <http://www.journalsleep.org/ViewAbstract.aspx?pid=28718> (accessed May 20, 2014)
3. Stanford Sleep Disorders Clinic and Research Laboratory. "The effects of sleep extension on athletic performance in collegiate basketball players." Published in the Journal of Sleep, July 2011. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21731144> (accessed May 20, 2014)
4. University of Chicago Medical Center. "Sleep loss limits fat loss." ScienceDaily. October 2010. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/10/101004211637.htm> (accessed May 20, 2014)
5. University Hospitals Case Medical Center. "Sleep deprivation linked to aging skin, study suggests." ScienceDaily. July 2013. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/07/130723155002.htm> (accessed May 20, 2014)

This is intended to be general health information and not medical advice or services. You should consult your doctor for medical advice or services, including seeking advice prior to undertaking a new diet or exercise program.

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