

Benefits of Exercise and Rest



It is hard to imagine a single practice with more health benefits than regular exercise. In addition to protecting our heart in numerous ways, exercising:

- ❖ May help to prevent cancers of the breast, uterus, and colon
- ❖ Strengthens our lungs and helps them to work more efficiently
- ❖ Tones and strengthens our muscles
- ❖ Builds stamina and gives us more energy
- ❖ Keeps our joints in good condition
- ❖ Improves balance
- ❖ May slow bone loss
- ❖ Help us to relax and cope better with stress
- ❖ Build confidence
- ❖ Allow us to fall asleep more quickly and sleep more soundly

It is never too early or late to make exercise a healthy habit in our life! To get the long-term benefits, exercise should not be done only for 'special occasions', instead it should become a lifestyle habit.

*During states of optimal health, **exercise is balanced with rest.** Sleep is incredibly important to recharge, repair and heal the body as many healing substances produced by the body are secreted at this time.*

Some of the benefits of Sleep include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Learning and memory: Sleep helps the brain commit new information to memory through a process called memory consolidation.
- ❖ Metabolism: Chronic sleep deprivation may cause weight gain by affecting the way our bodies process and store carbohydrates.
- ❖ Safety: Sleep debt contributes to a greater tendency to fall asleep during the daytime. These lapses may cause falls and mistakes such as medical errors, air traffic mishaps, and road accidents.
- ❖ Mood: Sleep loss may result in irritability, impatience, inability to concentrate, and moodiness. Too little sleep can also leave us too tired to do the things we like to do.
- ❖ Cardiovascular health: Serious sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, increased stress hormone levels, and irregular heartbeat.
- ❖ Disease: Without adequate sleep, the immune system becomes weak, making us more vulnerable to colds, flu, and other infections and diseases. And if we get sick, it takes us longer to recover.
- ❖ Body weight: One of the lesser known benefits of sleep is that it helps regulate the hormones that affect and control our appetite. Studies have shown that when our body is deprived of sleep, the normal hormone balances are interrupted and our appetite increases.

Some tips for sleeping better:

- ❖ Develop a relaxing bedtime routine: A consistent, relaxing routine before bed sends a signal to your brain that it is time to wind down, making it easier to fall asleep.
- ❖ Get stress and anxiety under control: Understanding how to manage stress, and learning relaxation techniques will aid better sleep.
- ❖ Improve our diet: Eating lighter meals before bed and exercising regularly can help in attaining deeper sleep.

When we underestimate how important sleep is, we are forgetting one simple fact... sleep is not a luxury, it is a biological function.

If you are interested in receiving more information on rest and exercise or other relevant and useful information, remember that your EAP is here to help. Contact us at eap@familiesinaction.net

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