



HEALTH & WELLNESS

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ISSUE
#4

SLEEP FOUNDATIONS

Why Sleep?

Consistent, quality sleep is essential for athletic performance as well as mental and physical health. Even small changes in your sleep, compounded over multiple nights, can make a difference in your readiness to perform, and reduce vulnerability to illness and injury.

How much sleep do I need?

There is no one size fits all for a recommended dose of sleep and it's important you know your individual needs. Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep nightly. To find your appropriate sleep dose, average your total time asleep (include naps) across a typical 2-week period for the rough hrs/night estimate.

Athletes face unique obstacles to consistent high-quality sleep such as travel, heavy training loads, early or late practice times and stressors unique to competition and life. It's important to know that consistent sleep over time is more important than and will insulate from a single night of disrupted or short sleep.

When evaluating your current sleep duration:

1. Do I feel alert within 30 min of waking up?
2. Do I fall asleep between 15-30 min on average to fall asleep? If <30, consider extending your time in bed.

What if I have a bad night of sleep?

Sleep is more robust and resilient than many of us realize. We have a *homeostatic* mechanism, meaning it self-corrects. After a night of poor sleep, incorporate a nap if that is typical for your routine, but rest assured your brain adjusts to make sure you get the sleep you need over time. Get to know the dose of sleep you need, then prioritize consistency within your individual schedule to insulate against 1 night of disrupted sleep.

What disrupts sleep?

- Stress
- Training load
- Training/competition times
- Shifting wake/sleep times
- Travel across 3+ time zones
- Frequent travel
- Alcohol, caffeine, cannabis
- Large meals close to bed



NAPS

20-30 MINUTES CAN IMPROVE YOUR MOOD, ALERTNESS AND MEMORY, KEEP IT TO 20-90 MIN BETWEEN 1-4PM.

Tips for Consistent Sleep

1. **Time it right:** know your sleep duration needs. Then stabilize your wake-up time (+/-1 hour) daily, even on the weekends. If early/late training impacts your sleep window, consider a 20-90 min nap before 4pm to meet your total sleep time needs.
2. **Set up your environment:** Cool, Dark, Quiet. Use an eye mask or blackout curtains. Experts suggest keeping your bedroom around 65 degrees for the most optimal sleep. Try a white noise machine or fan to reduce peak sounds that disturb sleep. Address allergies and congestion and consider using a humidifier if it's dry.
3. **Set a routine:** Consistent, calming, pre-bed routine. Avoid social media and tech use within 1 hour of bedtime. If training or competing close to sleep, consider a warm shower to help lower your body temperature and build a plan for refueling.
4. **Stop struggling:** If you find yourself struggling to fall asleep at for more than 30 min, leave bed and do something boring, when you feel sleepy, return to bed.

When do I need to see a sleep professional?

- Your sleep duration is adequate but still feel tired throughout the day.
 - You nod off when participating in normal daytime activities (spending time with friends, watching TV)
 - You've been told you regularly and loudly snore, gasp, or choke in your sleep.
 - You struggle to recover after training sessions.
- For further consultation reach out to: sleep@usopc.org

