

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



604 Sleep Deprivation is Costing You Big Time

We've talked about sleep, and how a lack of it has negative longterm effects on our health. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we dig deeper and it's not all about longterm consequences. That's up next on The Extra Point.

When I published Directions magazine I frequently pull all-nighters to finish producing the layout in time to send it to the printer. Once, I stayed up for 72 hours. When I finally went home and hit the bed, I slept for nearly 20 hours. I had no idea how this hurt my health. Now I know and I would never do it again, unless the need was flat-out critical and there was no other way.

In his book, *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School*, author John Medina clearly shows the dangers of sleep deprivation. His book, along with others, also dispels as myth the idea that we can skimp on sleep all week long and somehow balance the scales on the weekend.

If we get, say, five hours of sleep per night Monday through Friday, that's a total of 25 hours. The goal is eight hours nightly. That puts us at a deficit of 15 hours. To catch up we would have to sleep 16 hours on both Friday and Saturday nights if the catchup theory worked.

There's a couple of things wrong with that. One, you can't play catchup with sleep. Two, even if you could, your body is already accustomed to five hours of sleep per night and it's not going to all of a sudden lock you in for 16 hours each for two days — then spring back to five hours nightly going into Monday. Yeah, that would be nice, but it doesn't work that way.

As we've discussed before, research has shown that damaging proteins are deposited in the brain and the body's cleanup crew is sent out to remove those proteins when we achieve deep sleep. Well, if we rarely get to deep sleep,

the proteins are not cleaned as well. Over time these deposits build up and impact cognitive functions. Sleep experts now think this is a connection to dementia and Alzheimer's Disease. But that's the longterm discussion. How does lack of sleep hurt us in the here and now?

Medina's research showed that if a student who normally scores in the top 10% of the class and gets less than 7 hours of sleep a night, his or her scores will begin to match the bottom 9% of students who are getting enough sleep. The bottom 9%.

Another study showed that one night of lost sleep resulted in a 30% loss in overall cognitive ability and performance for soldiers operating complex military hardware. Two nights of lost sleep resulted in a 60% drop.

Medina cited other studies that showed when sleep was restricted to 6 hours or less per night, cognitive performance was equivalent to someone who had just gone through 48 hours of continual sleep deprivation — in other words it was like they just performed two consecutive allnighters.

If you're a manager or business owner you need to accept a fact of life — if your workers suffer from a chronic lack of sleep, your organization is suffering from a chronic drop in productivity.

There's more. Do you consider yourself a multi-tasker? Here's the reality, the brain operates sequentially, focusing on one thing at a time, and there is a certain amount of time required for the brain to switch from one thing to the next. This is measured in fractions of a second.

(Con't.)

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Imagine if you're driving while talking on your phone and there's no hands-free device. You're steering the vehicle and holding the phone, maybe even looking at a text message. If you're traveling at 40 miles per hour it will take less than a second to go 50 feet, and another half-second for the brain to focus. Now you've gone 75 feet. Then you glance at the text for a second, maybe two, then back to the road, another half-second for the brain to focus, and in total you've gone about the length of a football field. You know what, it will even take longer if you're suffering from sleep deprivation.

Here's your bottom line...80% of vehicle crashes happen within three seconds of some kind of driver distraction.

Need more? Lack of sleep makes it extremely difficult to lose weight. Do you diet and work out, and still can't get rid of those pounds? How many hours of sleep do you get every night?

When people don't get enough sleep the body's ability to use the food it consumes drops. Stress hormone levels rise, your insulin goes out of whack, and your efforts at dieting are undermined.

Let this go on long enough and you begin to age at a faster rate inside, which will eventually show up outside.

Do everything you can to get eight hours of sleep. Your life will improve in many ways.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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