

Sleep loss will leak down into every nook and cranny of your physiology, even tampering with the very DNA nucleic alphabet that spells out your daily health narrative.

And at this point, you may be thinking, “Oh my goodness, how do I start to get better sleep? What are your tips for good sleep?”

Well, beyond avoiding the damaging and harmful impact of alcohol and caffeine on sleep, and if you’re struggling with sleep at night, avoiding naps during the day, I have two pieces of advice for you.

The first is regularity. Go to bed at the same time, wake up at the same time, no matter whether it’s the weekday or the weekend. Regularity is king, and it will anchor your sleep and improve the quantity and the quality of that sleep.

The second is keep it cool. Your body needs to drop its core temperature by about two to three degrees Fahrenheit to initiate sleep and then to stay asleep, and it’s the reason you will always find it easier to fall asleep in a room that’s too cold than too hot.

So aim for a bedroom temperature of around 65 degrees, or about 18 degrees Celsius. That’s going to be optimal for the sleep of most people.

And then finally, in taking a step back, then, what is the mission-critical statement here?

Well, I think it may be this: sleep, unfortunately, is not an optional lifestyle luxury. Sleep is a nonnegotiable biological necessity. It is your life-support system, and it is Mother Nature’s best effort yet at immortality.

And the decimation of sleep throughout industrialized nations is having a catastrophic impact on our health, our wellness, even the safety and the

education of our children. It's a silent sleep loss epidemic, and it's fast becoming one of the greatest public health challenges that we face in the 21st century.

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I believe it is now time for us to reclaim our right to a full night of sleep, and without embarrassment or that unfortunate stigma of laziness. And in doing so, we can be reunited with the most powerful elixir of life, the Swiss Army knife of health, as it were.

And with that soapbox rant over, I will simply say, good night, good luck, and above all...I do hope you sleep well.

Thank you very much indeed.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.

### **Question-and-answer session**

**David Biello:** No, no, no. Stay there for a second. Good job not running away, though. I appreciate that. So that was terrifying.

**Matt Walker:** You're welcome.

**David Biello:** Yes, thank you, thank you. Since we can't catch up on sleep, what are we supposed to do? What do we do when we're, like, tossing and turning in bed late at night or doing shift work or whatever else?

**Matt Walker:** So you're right, we can't catch up on sleep. Sleep is not like

the bank. You can't accumulate a debt and then hope to pay it off at a later point in time.

I should also note the reason that it's so catastrophic and that our health deteriorates so quickly, first, it's because human beings are the only species that deliberately deprive themselves of sleep for no apparent reason.

**David Biello:** Because we're smart.

**Matt Walker:** And I make that point because it means that Mother Nature, throughout the course of evolution, has never had to face the challenge of this thing called sleep deprivation. So she's never developed a safety net, and that's why when you undersleep, things just sort of implode so quickly, both within the brain and the body. So you just have to prioritize.

**David Biello:** OK, but tossing and turning in bed, what do I do?

**Matt Walker:** So if you are staying in bed awake for too long, you should get out of bed and go to a different room and do something different. The reason is because your brain will very quickly associate your bedroom with the place of wakefulness, and you need to break that association.

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So only return to bed when you are sleepy, and that way you will relearn the association that you once had, which is your bed is the place of sleep.

So the analogy would be, you'd never sit at the dinner table, waiting to get hungry, so why would you lie in bed, waiting to get sleepy?

**David Biello:** Well, thank you for that wake-up call. Great job, Matt.

**Matt Walker:** You're very welcome. Thank you very much.

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