



Sleep for Exercise & Exercise for Sleep

Sleep is an important part of looking after our health. We simply can't function and be productive without the right amount of rest.

In the short term a lack of sleep leads to loss of concentration, tiredness, fatigue and impaired physical and mental performance. In the long term lack of sleep can contribute to negative health outcomes that are difficult to undo. The combination of regular exercise, balanced nutrition and enough sleep form the foundation of physical health and wellbeing.

It is agreed that adults need 7 - 8 hours sleep a night, and when we don't get this amount of sleep it can quickly impact on other areas in your life. When you lack sleep it soon starts to feel normal to be tired and worn out, or lacking energy to achieve your to-do list.

Sleeping well is just as important as exercise and good eating patterns when we are looking at improving our health and fitness. It has been shown that not getting enough sleep is linked with overeating and not having the energy to maintain a regular exercise programme. Just as you plan ahead with what you eat, and book in regular exercise opportunities, the key to getting a good night's sleep is to make the time to fit it in.

If fatigue and tiredness is an issue for you, then check in on your sleeping habits, as there are some things you can do to help get a better night's rest.

Regular physical activity and exercise is one way to help set up good sleep patterns. On the other side of the equation, inactivity and stress can lead to interrupted sleep, or a lack of physical tiredness, which can make getting to sleep more difficult. Getting active also reduces your stress levels, and also encourages the release of feel good hormones as you exercise, and for a time afterwards. And by the end of the day that exercise will contribute to tiredness, which will assist with sleep.

It is while you sleep that much of our muscle recovery and repair happens, so just as exercise will help you sleep, good sleep habits will help you maintain your exercise programme and boost your results.

There are studies showing that there is a relationship between lack of sleep and the inability to lose weight, so if you are on a weight loss journey, then enough sleep is as important as that gym session.

It is recommended that in order to maximise sleep it can be worth taking time to set up a good sleep routine with time to relax and wind down. Exercise is best done at least 2 hours before sleep so that the body can return to homeostasis, a level of balance that will allow the process of rest to take shape.

If you think you could do with a better night's sleep, ask your REPs registered exercise professional for a copy of the Sleep Smart brochure from the 'Tell Me More' information series. This brochure has helpful tips on how to get a better night's sleep.

Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "warrant of fitness check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

