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Media Release – Not Getting Enough Sleep? It could be harming your Health

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



## **Not Getting Enough Sleep? It Could Be Harming Your Health**

With our Covid-19 levels meaning less activity, and more stress and anxiety to many, quality sleep can be out of reach.

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.

So, before you think that lack of sleep will do nothing more than make you a bit foggy, it's worth looking at some emerging research on the impact of sleep deprivation.

In research from a doctoral candidate in the department of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of California in Berkeley, they looked at how lack of sleep can reduce mechanisms for relieving pain, by recording pain thresholds with health participants. 'Across the group, the participants were feeling discomfort at lower temperatures, which shows that their own sensitivity to pain had increased after inadequate sleep' the research reported 'The injury is the same, but the difference is how the brain assesses the pain without sufficient sleep.' When looking at increased use of painkillers to numb pain, and the effect of pain on productivity, it is easy to see how it would impact on your health and wellbeing.

Research out of the Bristol University confirms the relationship between depression and lack of sleep. They noted that inability to go to sleep and stay asleep is a symptom in up to 75% of those diagnosed with depression. Those with unresolved sleep issues are also more likely to relapse after recovering from depression than those who have better sleep patterns.

Sleep research is not all doom and gloom though, especially to those who engage in regular physical activity in the evenings and have been warned that exercising later in the day can lead to difficulty in getting to sleep.

Researchers at Charles Sturt University, NSW worked with a group of middle-aged men investigating the relationship between sleep and appetite related to exercising at different times of the day. The study involved a 30 minute bout of HIIT at different times of the day with results showing that it was only the evening exercise session that did not have a negative impact on subsequent sleep. While a limited range of people and sample size makes it unclear whether this relates to all populations at the same rate, it does show that an evening exercise session is not guaranteed to impact on ability to go to sleep.

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 information from their 'Tell Me More' series. This brochure has some helpful tips to get a better night's sleep.

References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181883/>

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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.*

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