



presents:

SLEEPLESS

IN MANITOBA

MAKING SLEEP WORK FOR YOU



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Acknowledgements

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SLEEPLESS

IN MANITOBA



Information provided in this booklet is general in content and should not be seen as a substitute for professional medical advice. Concerns over sleep or other medical conditions should be discussed with a family doctor.

Sleepless in Manitoba is a resource that was developed to enhance the personal well-being, safety, and success of Manitoba’s farmers, ranchers, shift workers, and all those who live and work in rural Manitoba. Sleep affects everyone’s health and safety.

In January, 2013, the Manitoba Farm & Rural Support Services (MFRSS) ran a series of workshops in five rural communities examining the relationship between stress, sleep, and safety. The workshops, entitled “*Sleepless in Manitoba: Making Sleep Work For You*”, were based on the successful Sleepless in Saskatchewan series held in 2005-2008.

The Manitoba Farm & Rural Support Services gratefully acknowledges the Agricultural Health & Safety Network for allowing us to adapt the “*Sleepless in Saskatchewan*” booklet for use in Manitoba. We also recognize the efforts of the late Jon Shearer and Ken Imhoff to bring the important issue of sleep safety to rural communities. Many thanks to Dr. Carlyle Smith of Trent University for his updates to the original document.

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The Manitoba Farm & Rural Support Services provides information, support, counselling, and referrals over the phone and on-line to farmers, rural and northern Manitobans. The MFRSS is a program of Clinic Community Health Centre and is funded by Manitoba Health.



Introduction To Sleep

“ If we live to be 75 years old, we will have spent 20-25 years (about 1/3 of our lives) sleeping or trying to sleep. We spend more time sleeping than any other single activity in our lives. Poor sleep results in poor mental and physical health, a shorter life span and a lower quality of life. We should be spending a lot more time finding out how to sleep well and how to remedy poor sleep. ”
– Dr. Carlyle Smith

Our bodies are designed to go to sleep soon after dark, and wake up around dawn. Ever since the invention of the light bulb, we have been compensating for disturbed sleep cycles.

There are times when we don't get the amount of sleep we should, but during those times we need to focus on getting the best quality sleep. The eight hour beauty sleep is a myth. The human body is designed to sleep in 90 minute cycles that add up to 6, 7.5 or 9 hours of sleep per night.

As children we try to get out of sleep, and as adults we seem to chase it. Everyone goes through periods of their life when sleep seems to be elusive, however our bodies require sleep in order to work properly. Our bodies rest, restore and grow while we are asleep. Whether poor sleep is caused by stress, life changes, hormonal changes and/or health issues, the key is to get better quality sleep.

Tips For Getting A Good Sleep

- Practice a regular bedtime routine to help relieve daytime stress
- Consistently go to bed and get up at the same time
- Take a warm bath rather than a shower an hour or so before bed. This will raise the core body temperature, thus fooling the body into turning down the thermostat before bed
- Reading calming material
- A darker room is better for sleeping
- Eat lightly in the evening. Include both protein and carbohydrates in a snack
- Avoid smoking, caffeine, and alcohol
- Go to bed when you are tired and turn out the lights. If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get up and do something else
- Light exercise within three hours of bedtime, but not just before you plan to sleep
- Have a 20-minute nap during the day
- Sleep with the window slightly open to negatively charge the air which will improve your sleep
- Use stress management techniques
- Change the light bulbs in your house to broad spectrum. Broad spectrum light bulbs promote alertness during the day and result in rebound sleepiness at night



The Effects of Poor Sleep

According to Dr. Reid (Respirologist and Sleep Specialist, University of Saskatchewan) the most common effects of poor sleep are daytime sleepiness and not feeling refreshed in the morning. Research links quality sleep with healthy neurological and hormone functioning, strengthening of the immune system and cell repair.

Other effects of poor sleep may include:

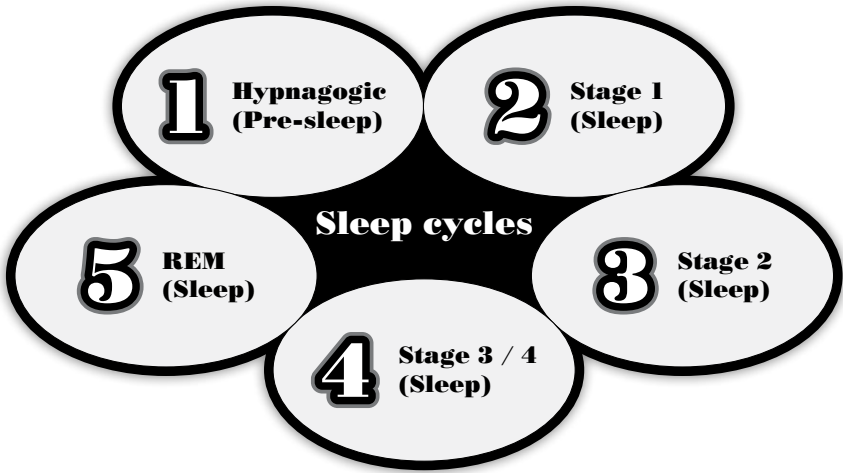
- Lack of concentration
- Forgetfulness or memory loss
- Errors in judgment
- Depression
- Irritability
- Reduced reaction time leading to increased risk of injury
- Decreased motivation and reduced productivity
- Contribution to obesity
- High blood pressure

Understanding Sleep Cycles

There are five main sleep stages or cycles. Each sleep cycle lasts about 90 minutes. It is important to sleep either 6, 7.5 or 9 hours. If these cycles are interrupted your sleep will be fragmented.

"The higher the level of sleep fragmentation the higher the level of waking fatigue" - Jon Shearer

5 Stages of Sleep



The stages of each cycle include a drifting off period and a light sleep period, where a person can be easily wakened. Deep sleep is a stage in which it is difficult to wake an individual. In deep sleep, blood pressure, heart rate and breathing are at their lowest.

Good sleep results in waking refreshed and energetic, prepares your brain for the next day, and renews the individual's mental balance and productivity.

Hypnagogic (Pre-sleep)

period is when the individual performs little rituals about getting comfortable. It leads to Stage 1 sleep. The body begins to slow down.

Stage 1 is a transitional stage often confused by the sleeper as being awake.

Stage 2 is sometimes referred to as "Napping Sleep". The sleeper is easily aroused and can still hear the world around them.

Stage 3 / 4 is also called "Deep Sleep". Biochemical cycles are stabilized. Without it we get sick. Fragmented Stage 3 / 4 sleep can be physically damaging. During Stage 4 sleep the body produces

the steroid responsible for healthy functioning of the immune system. You get the largest amount of human growth hormone.

Stage 5 is known as Rapid Eye Movement (REM) or "Dreaming Sleep". REM sleep is very important for psychological well-being. Lack of REM sleep makes us irritable.

"The important thing to recognize is that we're all a little bit different. The length of sleep shouldn't matter as much as the quality of sleep."

- Dr. Skomro, Respiriologist and Sleep Specialist, University of Saskatchewan.

Shift Work

According to Stats Canada, over one quarter of Canadian workers are shift workers.



“Numerous studies have shown that commercial truck drivers, night workers, and shift workers do not get adequate sleep and build up a large sleep debt over their shift cycles” (Cara Williams, Stats Canada)

The strain of shift work can lead to increased levels of stress. Therefore it is imperative that we take measures to do what we can to get better quality sleep.

Under normal conditions the body follows a circadian rhythm. “Circadian” means to occur in a cycle. The human body naturally follows a 24-hour cycle of wakefulness and sleepiness.

Shift workers must be alert and ready to work when their bodies would normally be going to sleep. On days off, many shift workers return to normal hours resulting in a variety of physical and mental symptoms related to circadian rhythm disruption. Shift work can be socially isolating as well, and may contribute to increased stress and/or mental health concerns.

- Shift work can be unsettling to the body’s natural rhythm.
- The most common health complaint from shift workers is lack of sleep.
- Tolerance to shift work decreases with age.
- The ability to adjust to shift work is different for every person. It may work well for your lifestyle, or it may be very frustrating.
- Shift work can create challenges in one’s social and /or family life.

Are You In Sleep Debt?

Shift workers and others who do not get enough sleep build up what’s known as “sleep debt” over their shift cycles. Often the sleep that they do get is of lesser quality. Sleep debt results in decreased ability to concentrate, a deterioration in performance, and moodiness. Close to 20% of the Canadian workforce could be described as fatigued.

Shift Work Sleep Tips:

- If you must work shift work, pay special attention to your sleep environment.
- Make your sleep time sacred. Remind friends and family to leave you alone while you sleep.
- Develop a sleep routine that fits for you. Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. Keep your body in a routine.
- Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine, and sodium-rich foods after midnight if you are planning to sleep from morning until afternoon.
- Sleep in a quiet, dark room. Use an eye mask, or hang very dark curtains.
- Eat potassium-rich foods (e.g. Bananas, almonds, avocados, potatoes, etc.) during night shifts.
- Make time for adequate sleep.
- Keep the bedroom cool.
- Have a nap before work or on a break to improve alertness and reduce accidents.
- In a noisy household, use earplugs or muffle noises with a fan or a “white noise” machine.
- Develop a pre-bedtime ritual to unwind from your shift.

Working At Night:

- Keep the light bright.
- Take short breaks throughout your shift.
- Get up and walk around during breaks.
- Talk with co-workers.
- Looks for signs of drowsiness in each other.
- Try to eat normal meals during your shift
- Don't leave the more tedious tasks to the end of your night shift when you are likely to feel most drowsy.
- Exchange ideas with co-workers on ways to cope with shift work.

Balancing Family & Friends:

Shift workers are at risk for highly fragmented sleep, resulting in higher levels of stress and increased waking fatigue. This can take its toll on relationships with friends and family. If this is the case, talk to your friends and family about your concerns. Try to come up with a plan that will enable you to balance your need for quality sleep with the shared need of quality time together.



Note to Partners: it is of the utmost importance to your entire family that you support your partner's sleep strategy!



Long Haul Trucking

"Truck driver fatigue can be a contributing factor in as many as 30 to 40% of all heavy truck accidents" – US National Transportation Safety Board

Long haul truck driving can wreak havoc on sleep schedules. Truck drivers are prone to fatigue like other shift workers, and should make sure they are getting good quality sleep when they have the opportunity. Fatigue can creep up on you before you know it. You can become irritable, make bad driving decisions, and/or take longer to react to changing conditions. When this happens, its time to take a break.

In Canada a driver can operate a commercial vehicle under the National Safety Code up to 13 hours per day, but it is recommended the driver not drive for more than two hours without stopping for a rest.

"To be safe, you have to be alert. To be alert you have to be rested." – Helen Volk, Occupational Health Nurse



Agriculture & Sleep

Farming and shift work are talked about as if they are separate. Farming and shift work are a common lifestyle for many.

“People ought to be aware that if they’re working longer hours they’re significantly increasing their risk of injury” – Louise Hagel, Epidemiologist (CCHSA)

Because of the lifestyle, farming often becomes shift work. After working full time at another job, many farmers get home to face varying activities from chores to fieldwork.

A person can be robbed of quality sleep due to the lifestyle routines and work demands of farming. Shift work during peak seasons and/or off farm employment can contribute to poor quality sleep. Time-stressed people are more likely to experience difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep. Lack of sleep causes lack of concentration and can cause injury. Lack of sleep is a serious risk factor when one is putting in very long work days over an extended period of time.

High demand farming seasons such as calving, seeding and harvest, combined with working at off-farm jobs make for very long days. The stress associated with farming can prevent an individual from getting quality sleep. Farming while sleep deprived can be like farming while intoxicated.

Getting the best quality of sleep that you can, even when you do not have a large amount of time will help your work performance.

Here are some things you can do:

- A sleep routine will help make the most of the time you have available to sleep.
- Make your breaks a priority even when you are in the field.
- Try the 20-minute power nap even if you have to do it outside.
- Switch tasks whenever possible. For example, switch from combining to trucking.
- Stop to eat regularly and drink plenty of water.
- Practice sleep rituals so that you can get quality sleep when you do have a chance to sleep.

Here's What Farmers Are Saying

"Sleep is always on the back burner, the last thing you consider." – Lori & Greg

"People have to realize that you have to get some sleep to stay safe to be able to farm efficiently. Working more hours in a day maybe isn't the most efficient way to do things. It's just not that simple when you are a farmer." – Kim & Julie

"You do things (on the farm) you never thought you'd do before when you are short on sleep." – Lorne

"Most farmers push it to the limit. On two or three hours of sleep, things are happening and they wonder why. You have to change your lifestyle, take your breaks, and get proper rest." – Harvey

Sleep Disorders

According to Statistics Canada's Community Health Survey, 3.3 million Canadians over the age of 15 are affected by a sleep disorder.

"Safety is one of the most important reasons we treat sleep disorders"
– Dr. Skomro

Sleep Apnea

The word apnea means “no breathing”. Sleep apnea refers to pauses in breathing that occur while you sleep. These pauses last for 10 to 30 seconds, possibly longer, until the body reacts with a bigger breathing effort to overcome the lack of oxygen. This cycle happens over and over throughout the night, interfering with the normal sleep patterns.

Did you know:

- 1 out of 5 adults has at least mild sleep apnea (20%)?
- 1 out of 15 adults has at least moderate sleep apnea (6.6%)?
- 2 to 3% of children are likely to have sleep apnea?
- Prolonged, untreated sleep apnea results in marked brain cell death

The most important symptoms of sleep apnea are excessive daytime sleepiness and snoring with pauses in breathing.

Symptoms include:

- High blood pressure
- Irritability
- Gasping or choking during sleep
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Lack of concentration
- Morning Headaches
- Memory Loss
- Impotence

Things you can control to help your sleep apnea:

- Diet and weight control, including exercise
- Minimize nicotine, alcohol and caffeine intake
- Consult a sleep specialist to see if you are a suitable candidate for a continuous positive air pressure (CPAP) device. This device restores normal nighttime breathing.

Insomnia

Insomnia can be defined as the inability to fall asleep and stay asleep for an extended period of time.

Did you know:

- 4 out of 10 adults have experienced some degree of insomnia.
- 1 out of 10 adults have a serious insomnia problem.
- Less than 15% of individuals have ever consulted a professional about their problem.

Symptoms include:

- Inability to fall asleep within 30 minutes of “lights out”.
- Able to fall asleep but experience frequent awakenings during the night.
- Able to fall asleep and stay asleep for a few hours, but then awaken in the night and unable to get back to sleep for the rest of the night.
- Inability to stop thinking about daytime activities.
- Worrying about the fact of lying awake and not sleeping.
- Increased stress levels upon entering the bedroom.

Things that can help you control your nighttime insomnia.

- Keep regular bed and wake times.
- Do not nap in the daytime.
- Only light snacks (some carbohydrate and protein) before bed.
- Do not overexpose yourself to excessive bright light in the evening (such as a large T.V. or computer monitor screen.)
- Keep a dark, quiet bedroom, with no T.V., internet or other daytime activity available.

- Reduce the temperature in your bedroom to 18° c or less.
- Warm bath (not too hot) about two hours before bedtime.
- Avoid physical exercise closer than three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid serious mental activity in the evening, especially if it is stressful.
- Stay away from caffeine, alcohol, nicotine.
- Be aware of any food allergies and avoid these foods, especially in the evening.
- Practice a relaxation technique of some kind in the evening.
- Use prescription and over the counter drugs sparingly and only for a short time.

Restless Legs Syndrome

Restless legs syndrome (RLS) is characterized by disagreeable leg sensations, usually prior to sleep onset that cause an almost irresistible urge to move the legs. This movement reduces the sensation temporarily.

Did you know:

- 6% of Canadians complain of this problem
- It is more liable to occur in women than in men
- It gets worse with age

Other associated symptoms

- It is more likely to be experienced by those with heart problems.
- It often occurs in women during pregnancy.
- It is often seen along with sleep apnea symptoms.
- It is sometimes associated with a mental disorder.
- RLS can be associated with SSRI (depression) medications.

Things to do that might help RLS

- Minimize alcohol intake.
- Go on a weight reduction diet
- Try to avoid nicotine.
- Consult a physician or sleep specialist for appropriate medication
- Take a cognitive behavioural therapy program (CBT)

Periodic Leg Movement Syndrome

Periodic Leg Movement Disorder (PLMS) is characterized by periodic and highly stereotyped limb movements during sleep. The actual leg movements only last a few seconds but reoccur every 20-40 seconds at certain times in the night.

Did you know:

- 4% of Canadians suffer from this sleep disorder
- It is more likely to happen in women than in men
- It is more prevalent in older individuals

Other associated factors:

- Heart disease
- More likely to occur in the shift worker
- Excessive snoring
- High daily caffeine intake
- Prolonged use of sleeping pills
- Stressful life style

Things to help you control PLMS

- Diet and weight control
- Reduce caffeine intake
- Try to reduce number of shifts in night work
- Discuss medications with a physician and try to reduce the number taken
- Reduce stressful lifestyle

Organizing the Bedroom

“The mattress should be the best piece of furniture in the house” – Jon Shearer

Your bedroom is an important aspect of sleep planning:

- Change sheets regularly.
- Acquire a pillow to suit you and change every 6 months.
- Get dust mite covers for mattresses and pillows.
- The bedroom should be 3 to 4 degrees cooler than the rest of the house.
- Keep bedroom well-ventilated (with fresh air) and at a comfortable temperature throughout the night.
- Darken your room to simulate night time.
- Keep the clock face turned away from you, and don't look at it if you wake in the middle of the night.
- Use the bedroom for sleep and sex only. All other activities should take place elsewhere.
- The bedroom should not be used as an office.
- Remove TV's, computers, and other electronic devices from the bedroom.
- Acquire a firm, comfortable mattress.
- Consider painting your room a soft, relaxing colour.



The Power Nap

“Napping is probably closer to what nature intended for humans than the single sleep period that our culture has adopted” - Dr. Carlyle Smith

Unfortunately, Canadian society is not structured in a way that encourages nap taking. The remedy for unwanted sleepiness is often caffeine and/or sugar. If you are unable to take a nap during the day, you can also combat afternoon sleepiness by going for a short walk or drinking a large glass of water instead of indulging in caffeine and sugar.

Recent research has demonstrated that a well-timed nap can be extremely beneficial to the body. Naps can be planned, in that the nap is taken before the person actually gets sleepy. There is also emergency napping that can be used to combat fatigue during an activity (driving while dropping off to sleep is an obvious example). As well, there is habitual napping, with the nap taking place at the same time each day.

Benefits of Napping

- Naps restore and increase alertness in the first few hours after awakening from the nap.
- Naps enhance performance on any physical task, from manual activities to sports.
- Naps reduce opportunities for accidents and injury.
- Naps increase psychological well-being while reducing negative moods.

Napping Tips

- A natural body nap time occurs between 1-4 p.m. (sometimes called the “post lunch dip”). It is relatively easy to fall asleep in this time period.
- The nap length should be 10-20 minutes long. If the napper sleeps longer than this, s/he often has

trouble waking up again and feels quite drowsy.

- Find a quiet restful place to nap, so that you actually fall asleep.
- Don’t nap too late in the day. An evening nap may interfere with the ability to fall asleep at normal bedtime.

Other Considerations

- Napping too long (more than 20 min.) can leave a person with sleep inertia, which is a persistent drowsiness and inability to fully awaken from the nap.
- Napping is sometimes considered a mark of laziness and only for children. In fact it is very good for both adults and children, in terms of physical and mental health.
- Napping enhances memory formation.



Sleeping Pills

“Sleeping pills induce insomnia” – William C. Dement, Stanford University Sleep Centre

Sleeping pills are not a quick fix for sleep problems, and over the long haul make insomnia worse. There are several kinds of pills available. Over-the-counter drugs are often used by those with a temporary or short-term problem that interferes with sleep. These drugs are not particularly effective for serious insomnia. The same is true of herbal remedies. However, there is often a strong placebo effect (the person believes that the pill will work) and over the short term it may seem to help with the problem.

For chronic insomnia, prescription drugs will provide some initial relief. However, these drugs are usually addictive, and to get the same effect over the long term an ever-increasing dosage is needed. In the end, the user must stop the use of these pills and that is often difficult.

It is now clear that the best method of improving sleep quality is through relaxation techniques, cognitive behavioural therapies (or CBT), and by a change in lifestyle. See the section on Stress and Sleep for ideas on how to manage and reduce your stress levels and improve your sleep.

At best, sleeping pills are a temporary form of relief, and not a cure. Always check with your doctor before using, changing and/or reducing any medication.



Children & Sleep

Often we are better at getting our children into good sleep routines than we are with ourselves. Take the time to get into the habit of practicing good bedtime routines for you and your child. Children who have good sleep routines will deprive you of less sleep and everyone wins!

Young children of all ages have both Non REM sleep and REM sleep in alternating patterns as do adults.

Babies (Newborns, 1-2 months) sleep around the clock and the irregular sleep – wake cycle interacts with the need to be fed and changed. They get anywhere from 10 – 18 hours of sleep a day.

Sleep Tips for Newborns:

- Learn to identify signs of sleepiness.
- Put the baby in the crib when drowsy, not asleep.
- Baby should be on his/her back, head clear of blankets and other items.
- Encourage nighttime sleep.

Infants (3 - 11 months) typically sleep 9-12 hours during the night and take at least one nap in the daytime lasting anywhere from 30 min. - 2 hours.

Sleep Tips for Infants:

- Develop regular daytime and bedtime schedules.
- Create a consistent and enjoyable bedtime routine.
- Establish a “sleep friendly” environment.
- Encourage the child to fall asleep independently and to become a “self soother” .

Toddlers (1-3 years) need 12-14 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Their nap times will decrease with age and become shorter in length. The drive for independence and an increase in motor and cognitive abilities can interfere with sleep. Daytime sleepiness and behaviour problems may signal poor sleep or a sleep problem.

Sleep Tips for Toddlers:

- Maintain a daily sleep schedule and a consistent bedtime routine.
- Make the bedroom environment the same every night.
- Set limits that are consistent, communicated and enforced.
- Encourage the use of a security object such as a blanket or stuffed animal.

Preschoolers (3-5 years) typically sleep 11-13 hours each night and most do not nap after five years of age. Difficulty falling sleep and waking in the night are common. Sleep disorders such as sleepwalking and night terrors may be present.

Sleep Tips for Preschoolers:

- Maintain a regular and consistent sleep schedule.
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine that ends in the bedroom where the child sleeps.
- Child should sleep in the same environment every night. The room should be cool and dark with no TV or media device.



School Age Children (5-12 years) need 11-12 hours sleep.

There is an increasing demand on their time and they spend a lot more time in formal learning situations. There is the possibility of nightmares and sleep disruptions. Watching TV and time spent online leads to bedtime resistance. There is often difficulty falling asleep, anxiety around sleep and less sleep time than is necessary. The more sleep they get, the more likely they are to succeed at school, both in the classroom and in the gym.

Sleep Tips for School Aged Children

- Teach children about the importance of sleep to health and school success.
- Continue to enforce regular sleep schedules and consistent bedtime routine.
- Make the child’s bedroom conducive to sleep – cool, dark and quiet.
- Keep electronic devices out of the bedroom.

**“People who sleep like a baby usually don’t have one!”
– Leo J Burke**

Youth (13 – 19 years)

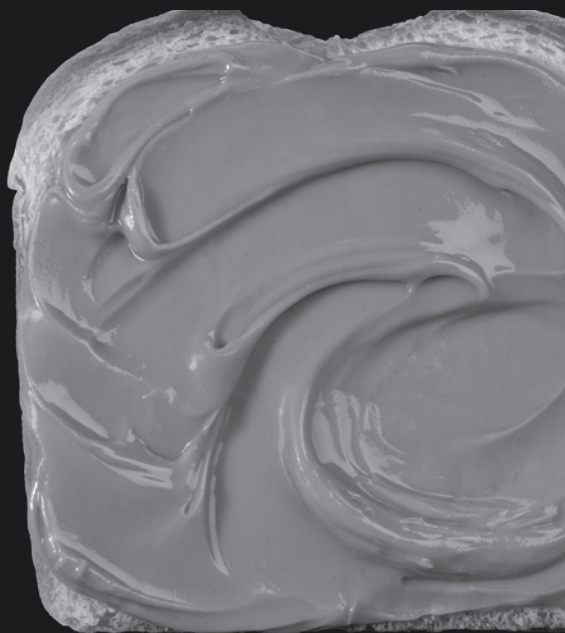
require varying amounts of sleep, but they still need at least 8-9 hours. Their bodies are doing a tremendous amount of growing and changing and they sometimes will have sleep marathons of 12 hours or more. Although they may fight bedtime rituals and times, they also need their sleep. A teen's biological clock keeps them awake later in the evening and sleeping later in the morning. Many teens go to school too sleepy to learn properly because of this circadian body change that is not their fault. In order to properly consolidate the memories of the many things they are learning, they do need to get enough sleep. There is a clear link between level of scholastic performance (and sports performance) with hours of sleep.

Sleep Tips for Youth

- Emphasize the importance of sleep and the competitive edge that sleep gives to daytime performance.
- Continue to follow a regular sleep schedule and regular bedtime routine.
- Avoid the drift to later hours for bed as much as possible.
- Be aware of the sleep onset lag that follows late night TV, cell phone or computer use and try to limit this late night online activity. It is the most likely culprit for pushing back sleep onset and late morning awakenings.
- Be careful of late evening snacking. Be sure the snacks are light and contain a mix of healthy carbohydrate (minimal sugar) and some protein.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks.



Foods That Help You Sleep



The best foods for stimulating sleep are those that contain tryptophan (a naturally occurring amino acid). L-Tryptophan is used by the body to make the sleep inducing neurotransmitters of serotonin and melatonin. The digestion process is complex, and the best procedure is to have a food rich in tryptophan along with some complex carbohydrates. The carbohydrates induce insulin which essentially clears the blood stream of other amino acids that compete with tryptophan and allows it to do its work of manufacturing serotonin and melatonin, two substances important for sleep. Another helpful agent is Calcium, which can be found in a variety of dairy products. It aids the brain to use tryptophan.

Here are some foods combinations that normally induce sleepiness. These example combos work better than single foods alone.

- Whole grain cereal and milk.
- Peanut butter on toast .
- Cheese and bread or crackers.
- Banana and milk.
- Turkey sandwich (modest size).
- Hard boiled egg and toast.
- Almonds or almond butter and a glass of warm milk.

Foods to Avoid

Foods high in protein and containing tryptophan eaten alone are less helpful as they also likely contain amino acids like tyrosine that make you more alert. Carbohydrates alone are also of limited help. Further, the carbohydrate portion of your late evening meal must not have carbohydrates that have too much sugar, such as sweet pastries, which will put you on a sugar high, followed by a sugar low, and the release of stress hormones that will keep you awake.

Tips for Bed Time Snacks

- The best bedtime liquids are non-alcoholic, non-caffeine drinks like milk and herbal teas (such as chamomile tea, decaf green tea).
- Drinks can be taken warm but not HOT. Your body temperature must go down if you are to sleep at all. Hot liquids push back sleep onset by reversing the natural temperature drop.
- Keep liquid volume modest to avoid too many awakenings for trips to the bathroom.
- Avoid large volume meals, as digestion will interfere with sleep.
- Avoid sweet, spicy or fatty foods that are hard to digest.
- If you suspect certain foods keep you awake even in small amounts – you may unknowingly have an allergy.
- Avoid caffeine at least 3-4 hours before bed.
- Avoid alcohol 4-5 hours before bed. Alcohol at bedtime can ensure a quick sleep onset, but in several hours, middle of the night awakenings occur and it is very difficult to get back to sleep. As well, alcohol induces abnormal sleep so that the person awakens deprived of normal sleep. This sleep deprived effect is part of any “hang-over” feeling.



Stress & Sleep

Almost 50% of Canadians say that they reduce their sleep time in an attempt to gain more time in a day. Time-stressed (and/or generally stressed) individuals are more likely to have problems going to sleep or staying asleep. Stress is the feeling of pressure, strain or tension that comes from dealing with challenging situations. The key to dealing effectively with stress is balance. Everyone has stress, however everyone deals with it differently. No two people respond exactly the same way to a given situation because they view the stressful situation differently and have different coping skills. Don't wait until your body is screaming for attention before you deal with the stress in your life. Be pro-active and monitor your stress levels.

- Good stress is still stress. Weddings, promotions, new babies, harvesting a great crop are usually considered to be positive life changes. However, they still count as stress regardless of how excited we may be about them.
- Almost half of Canadians say they cut back on their sleep when they are pressed for time.
- Tired shift workers are more likely to describe their lives as “very stressful”.
- Sleep apnea adds to your stress level.

“We live in a busy world. The busier we are the more stressful life becomes. The more stress we have the more our sleep is impacted. The more our sleep is impacted the more poor choices we make. It becomes a vicious circle, unless we learn to better manage our stress...” – Gerry Friesen

Symptoms of Stress include:

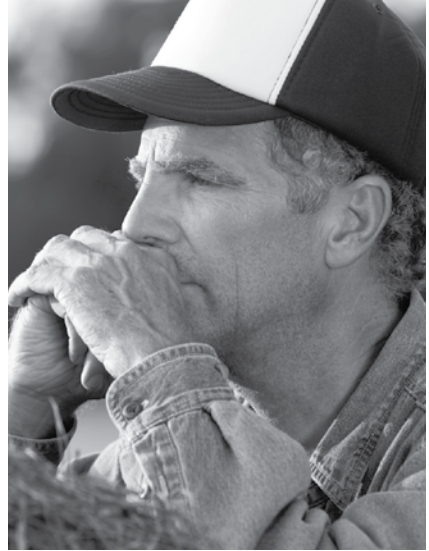
Physical: headaches, stomach problems, chest pain, fatigue, rapidly beating heart, grinding or clenching teeth.

Emotional: increased angry blow-ups, frustration, low self esteem, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts.

Behavioural: overeating, increased drug/alcohol consumption or smoking, changes in sleep, forgetfulness, short-temper.

Everyone is different. We must all find some type of relaxation that works for us. Here are some ideas to alleviate stress:

- Practice a hobby.
- Do some form of physical activity every day.
- Learn to relax and say “no” sometimes.
- Eat regular nutritious meals.



- Make time to sleep.
- Talk to a trusted friend, counsellor, or other professional.
- Manage your time well.
- Prioritize (tackle one job at a time).
- Communicate your needs and listen to others.
- Spend quality time with friends and family.
- Listen to music.
- Laugh!
- Write in a journal.
- Have a warm bath.
- Accept that some things are out of your control.
- Practice Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, deep muscle relaxation, and others. See www.de-stress.ca for more information.
- Call the Manitoba Farm & Rural Stress Line (1-866-367-3276) or chat with us online: www.ruralsupport.ca

“Make life changes before life changes.” – Gerry Friesen

The following information
was adapted from the website:
Enjoy Life More (Klinik Inc.)
found at www.de-stress.ca



Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Mindfulness is about paying attention to and becoming more aware of ourselves and the world around us, without judgment. It is about being more present in our own lives—being in the moment.

Have you ever started eating an ice cream cone, taken a lick or two, then noticed that you had only a sticky napkin in your hand? Have you ever travelled by car and arrived at your destination only to realize you haven't noticed anything or anyone you might have seen along the way? Of course you have. We all have! These are common examples of mindlessness, or "going on automatic pilot."

We all fall into habits of mind and body that result in times of inattention—that is, not being present in our own lives. The consequences of this state of inattention can sometimes be quite costly: we can miss some really important information and messages about our life, our relationships, and, indeed, our own health.

Often our reactions to the stressful events in our lives are habitual (that is, they occur essentially outside of our awareness) until, because of physical, emotional, or psychological dysfunction, we cannot ignore them any longer. These reactions can include tension in the body, painful emotional states, panic attacks and depression, and negative self-talk such as obsessive list-making or intense, even toxic, self-criticism.

An important antidote to this tendency to “go on automatic pilot,” is to practice mindfulness—that is, to pay more careful attention and to do it in a particular way. We all have the capacity for mindfulness within us: it is the quality of awareness that enables us to know what is in the present moment. We know what is going on outside our own skin, and we also know what is going on inside our own skin. Mindfulness enables us to know that seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, or even thinking is happening in the present moment.

We can practice mindfulness and become more present. All we have to do is to establish attention in the present moment and allow ourselves to rest in the awareness of what is here; to pay attention without trying to change anything; to allow ourselves to become more deeply and completely aware of what it is we are sensing, and to be with what we are experiencing. To rest in this quality of being, of being aware, in each moment as our life unfolds.

The more we can practice being more present and more aware of our life, the less driven by habits of reaction and inattention and just “going through the motions” we will become.

Here are five helpful hints for practicing mindfulness:

1. Expect your mind to wander.

Practice kindness and patience with yourself when this happens and gently return awareness to the breath sensation.

2. Notice any tendency to “be hard on yourself” or to feel frustrated or a failure. See this kind of judgment as just another kind of thinking and gently return awareness to the breath.

3. Expect to feel some relaxation, especially if you practice for even a few breaths or for a few moments. This relaxed feeling is an ally. It helps us to be

more present, more mindful. Relaxation alone is not what mindfulness is about, however! Rather, it is about being present with awareness.

4. Expect to become more mindful with practice. Expect to notice more things, including painful things. This actually represents progress. You are not doing anything wrong. Quite the opposite is true: you are increasing mindfulness for all things. When you begin to notice painful things, see if you can hold yourself with compassion and kindness, and continue to bring open-hearted awareness to the experience that is unfolding. By practicing staying present, not turning away from the pain in our lives, we can learn to remain open to all the possibilities in each situation. This awareness increases our chances for healing and transformation in facing the pain we feel. It also gives us a way to be present in those situations when there is nothing we can do to “get away from the pain.” We can discover that the quality of mindfulness is not destroyed or damaged by contact with pain, that it can enable us to know pain as completely and fully as it can any other experience.

5. Be careful not to try too hard.

Don't try to make anything happen or to achieve any special states or effects! Simply relax and pay as much attention as you can to just what is in the moment, whatever form that takes. Allow yourself to experience life directly as it unfolds, paying careful and open-hearted attention.

***Note:** How to Bring More Mindfulness into Your Life was adapted from material produced by Jeffrey Brantley, MD., consulting associate in the Duke Department of Psychiatry and the founder and director of the mindfulness-based stress reduction program at Duke University's Center for Integrative Medicine.*



Ten Simple Ways You Can Practice Mindfulness Each Day

- 1.** As you awaken in the morning, bring your attention to your breathing. Instead of letting your mind spin off into the previous day or the next, take mindful breaths. Focus on your breathing and sense the effects of breathing throughout your body.
- 2.** Instead of hurrying to your usual routine, slow down and enjoy something special about the morning—the smell of freshly baked bread or brewed coffee, the sound of the birds, the wind in the trees.
- 3.** On the way to work, school, or the barn pay attention to how you walk, drive, or take another form of transportation. Take some deep breaths, relaxing throughout your body.
- 4.** When stopped at a red light or stop sign, pay attention to your breathing and enjoy the landscape around you.
- 5.** When you arrive at your destination, take a few moments to orient yourself. Breathe consciously and calmly, relax your body, then begin.
- 6.** Become aware of any subtle signs of the physical or emotional tension throughout your day. When this happens take a break and practice a relaxation technique.
- 7.** Use the repetitive events of the day (the ringing telephone, a knock at the door, walking down the hall) as cues to practice mindfulness.
- 8.** As you return home at the end of your day, do so mindfully. Can you see and appreciate the environment around you? Can you enjoy walking or driving without rushing?
- 9.** Consciously make the transition into your home environment. If possible, after greeting your family or other housemates, give yourself a few minutes alone to ease the transition.
- 10.** As you prepare your body and mind to go to sleep, slowly let go of today and try not to worry about tomorrow. Take some slow, mindful, deep breaths. Relax...

De-Stressing Exercises

There are many different mindfulness based techniques that can help bring relief from stress. What follows are some de-stressing and meditation exercises you might find helpful. We encourage you to try them and find what works best for you.

(A) Mini-Relaxation Exercise

Let's face it. Sometimes life can be very busy and stressful. Mini-relaxation exercises help reduce anxiety and tension immediately, and you can do them with your eyes open or closed. You can do these exercises anywhere, anytime. No one will even know that you are doing them!

Some good times to do a mini-relaxation exercise are when you are:

- stuck in traffic
- put on hold during a phone call
- in your doctor's waiting room
- upset by what someone says to you
- waiting for a phone call
- sitting in a dentist's chair
- feeling overwhelmed by what you need to accomplish in the near future
- standing in line
- in pain

The basic method for doing a mini-relaxation exercise is quite simple:

1. Put your hand just below your navel. Take a deep breath, bringing air in through your nose and out through your mouth. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in and falling about an inch as you breathe out. If this is difficult for you, lie on your back or on your stomach, where you will be more aware of your breathing pattern. Remember to relax your stomach muscles.



(B) Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is an effective and widely used strategy for stress relief. It is a great technique for reducing overall body tension. It involves a two-step process during which you tense and relax different muscles in the body. With regular practice, progressive muscle relaxation helps you become aware of what tension and its opposite-- complete relaxation--feel like in all parts of the body. This awareness helps you spot and counteract the first signs of the muscular tension that accompanies stress. As your body relaxes, so will your mind. You can combine deep breathing with progressive muscle relaxation for an additional level of relief from stress. As you reduce the tension you carry in your body, your whole being will feel less stress, and you will enjoy increased physical and emotional health. Take care not to hurt yourself while tensing your muscles. You should never feel intense or shooting pain while doing this exercise. Make the muscle tension deliberate but gentle.

Note: if you have any medical issue that may hinder physical activity, consult your doctor first.

Here's how to get started:

- 1.** Find a quiet place and several free minutes to practice progressive muscle relaxation. Sit or lie down and make yourself comfortable. Loosen your clothing, take off your shoes and get comfortable. Take a few minutes to relax, breathing in and out in slow, deep breaths.
- 2.** Begin by tensing all of the muscles in your face. Make a tight grimace, close your eyes as tightly as possible, clench your teeth, even move your ears up if you can. Hold this for a count of eight as you inhale. Now exhale as you relax completely. Let your face go completely lax, as though you were sleeping. Feel the tension seep from your facial muscles and enjoy the feeling. Next, completely tense your neck and shoulders, again inhaling and counting to eight. Then exhale and relax. Continue down your body, repeating the procedure with the following muscle groups: chest, abdomen, entire right arm, right forearm and hand (making a fist), entire left arm, left forearm and hand (again making a fist), buttocks, entire right leg, lower right leg, right foot, entire left leg, lower left leg, and left foot.



(C) Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a relaxation technique that releases tension from the body and clears the mind, improving both physical and mental well-being. We tend to breathe shallowly or even hold our breath when we are feeling anxious. Sometimes we are not even aware that we are doing it. Shallow breathing limits your oxygen intake and adds further stress to your body. Breathing exercises can help to reduce this stress.

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much air as possible into your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than taking shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

The importance of good posture while doing deep-breathing exercises (or at any time, for that matter) is extremely important. While sitting, we tend to slouch, which compresses the diaphragm and other organs, resulting in shallow breathing. Slouching also strains muscles in the neck and back. It is helpful to sit in a chair with good back support.



Here is a deep-breathing exercise you can try:

1. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose. Try to make the hand on your abdomen rise, while keeping the hand on your chest still. Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you inhale, but your other hand should move very little. Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

2. Imagine that you are filling your body with air from the bottom up. Hold your breath to a count of two to five, or whatever you can handle. It is easier to hold your breath if you continue to hold out your abdomen. Slowly and steadily breath out through your mouth, feeling your hands move back in as you slowly contract your abdomen, until most of the air is out. Exhalation takes a little longer than inhalation. You can also do this exercise lying on your back.

3. You can use deep-breathing exercises to help you relax before you go to sleep, or fall back asleep if you awaken during the night. You can also practice deep breathing exercises standing up (e.g., while standing in line at the grocery store). If you are really tense and feel as if you are holding your breath, simply concentrate on slowly breathing in and out.

(D) Guided Imagery

Guided imagery is a convenient and simple relaxation technique that can help you quickly and easily manage stress and reduce tension in your body. It is virtually as easy as indulging in a vivid daydream. With practice, it can help you ease any tension and stress that you feel. Guided imagery involves imagining a scene in which you feel at peace, free to let go of all tension and anxiety.



Here's how to get started with guided imagery:

- 1. Get into a comfortable position.** Close your eyes and breathe deeply, focusing on breathing in feelings of peace and breathing out feelings of stress.
- 2. Once you get into a relaxed state,** begin to envision yourself in the midst of the most relaxing environment you can imagine. As you imagine your scene, try to involve all of your senses. What does it look like? What does it feel like on your skin? What special scents are involved? What is around you? Who is there or not there with you? What sounds do you hear? Do you feel any other sensations?
- 3. Stay here for as long as you like.** Enjoy your surroundings and let yourself be far from what stresses you. When you're ready to come back to reality, count back from 10 or 20 and tell yourself that when you get to number one, you'll feel more calm and refreshed, like returning from a vacation. But you won't even have left the room!

(E) Self-Massage

Getting a massage provides deep relaxation, and as the muscles in your body relax, so does your overstressed mind. There are many simple self-massage techniques you can use to relax and release stress:



1. Scalp Soother. Place your thumbs behind your ears while spreading your fingers on top of your head. Move your scalp back and forth slightly by making circles with your fingertips for 15-20 seconds.

2. Easy on the Eyes. Close your eyes and place your ring fingers directly under your eyebrows, near the bridge of your nose. Slowly increase the pressure for 5-10 seconds, then gently release. Repeat 2-3 times.

3. Sinus Pressure Relief. Place your fingertips at the bridge of your nose. Slowly slide your fingers down your nose and across the top of your cheekbones to the outside of your eyes. Repeat 3-4 times.

4. Shoulder Tension Relief. Reach one arm across the front of your body to your opposite shoulder. Using a circular motion, press firmly on the muscle above your shoulder blade. Repeat on the other side.

5. Foot Massage. Sit in a chair or on the floor. Get comfortable. You may or may not want to use lotion or oil. If you are sitting up, rest one foot on the opposite leg. Put one hand on top of the foot and the other closer to your toes, then stroke smoothly from your toes to your ankles. Glide your hands to the sole of your foot and massage the underside of your foot. Support your foot with one hand and with the other make a fist. With a circular motion, move along the sole of your foot. Support your foot with one hand and work on each toe individually. Squeeze and gently twist and stretch each toe. Stroke your ankle with your fingertips. Stroke up toward the leg. Then glide back to your toes. Finish by stroking your entire foot again. Do the same for the other foot.

(F) Meditation

When you practice meditation at home, choose a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Find a comfortable place to sit. Keep your posture straight but relaxed, feet flat on the floor, hands in your lap, making sure you are not rigid or stiff. Do not slump or slouch. Or, if you wish, sit cross-legged on a cushion on the floor. You should feel comfortable, but not so comfortable that you fall asleep. While practicing mindfulness, it is important to stay alert. Now, close your eyes...



1. Concentrate your attention completely on your breathing. Become aware of the sensations inside your air passages as the air enters the nose. Just become aware of that feeling as your breath goes in and out. Do not attempt to influence or check your breathing; just let it happen naturally. Marvel at the quality and precision of internal sensations that are normally ignored. Wonder at how deeply you can sense the air inside you. Just allow yourself time to be aware of the air going in and out, and nothing else. Keep your mind on your breathing.

2. It's okay if thoughts come into your mind; the mind will not clear completely. Just examine the thoughts for what they are, as if they were some strange animal that wandered into your sight.

3. When these thoughts come into your mind, allow them to wander off on their own and wish them well on their way. Do not get involved in the thought. Just notice that it is there and return your focus to your breathing.

4. Treat each thought as a guest. When a thought or feeling arises, simply observe and acknowledge it. There is no need to interpret it or to use it. You might wonder where it came from, what caused it to surface at that particular time, and what purpose it serves. If you feel yourself drifting away on a thought, then just return and refocus on your breathing. Use your breathing as the anchor for your mindfulness.

5. Stay in the moment as long as you can. Continue to focus on your breathing. Aim to clear your mind completely for five minutes. With practice, you will be able to extend the time to 20 minutes or more.



Spiritual Practices and Aboriginal Teachings

During times of fear, anxiety and stress, your own faith and / or spiritual practice can be a powerful resource. Your spiritual practices may not always prevent these times of stress, but they can help you through them.

Some people are unaware that they actually have a spiritual side to their being. Most people actually routinely make use of spiritual practices but just not in a formal way or may not identify them as being spiritual. Listening to music, taking a walk, reading inspirational words, or looking at the stars can all be spiritual practices. Some people spend time gardening or in such creative activities as art, writing, or dance. Some participate in yoga, swimming, or body-energy healing. All of these practices hold within them a potential that is more than just exercise for the body. It can also nurture the soul, restore of the mind, and deepen our connection with the world around us. Many people who no longer attend formal religious services still continue to pray regularly, and this can often take the form of an inner conversation with a divine being.

When experiencing the stresses that come with living and change, it can be helpful to discover or reclaim your spiritual practices, whatever they might be; let them be part of your strength to heal and your pathway to health.

For many First Nations communities and peoples, traditional teachings based on the Medicine Wheel are important sources of strength. Some First Nations people follow the ancient philosophy of life known as “the good way or the Red Road.” This philosophy is based on the connection among all living things, to the Great Spirit, or Mother Earth, and to one other. The Seven Sacred Teachings or Seven Virtues remind us that we are all one, connected to each other. This sense of connectedness is central to individual and collective well-being. All the significant stages of life are marked by ceremonies that signify these stages. The most common are smudging and drumming ceremonies, sweat lodges, feasts, and ceremonial give-aways. These practices can have tremendous benefits in promoting health and well-being and in managing stress. Elders play a special role in aboriginal society and can be a significant source of knowledge about traditional practices.

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