

Employee Assistance of the Pacific



Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Sleep—moe moe in Hawaiian—is a completely universal human experience but, strangely, there are many aspects of sleep that are surprising and getting a good night's sleep can sometimes be very frustrating. Problems with sleep are one of the more common issues that bring people to EAP. Poor sleep or sleeping too much are often related to stress, depression, anxiety or a host of other conditions. And coping with a challenging life situation is made much more difficult if you are not getting a good night's sleep.

True sleep disorders call for the help of a medical professional but often your sleeping patterns can be improved by following some common sense guidelines. Here are some tips for those times when you can't get to sleep or return to sleep:

Realize that frustration and 'trying harder' to fall asleep can be enough to keep anyone awake! The harder one tries, the more elusive sleep becomes.

If you are having difficulty sleeping, don't engage in activities that will render sleep unlikely or impossible! Don't clean house, read an interesting book, or play fast paced computer games. If you find it boring to read a procedures manual from the office try that instead.



In short, distract yourself from thinking about your inability to sleep (or any other stresses in your life) Focus instead on things so boring that you probably won't be able to stay awake long enough to think about them for any significant period of time.

If you eat a snack at such times, ensure that it is light and contains foods that will promote sleep. Milk (warm or cold), breads or low sugar cereals, bananas, and peanuts are known for their snooze promoting qualities.

And keep in mind that if life has presented you with a problem that keeps you awake at night, talking it over with an Employee Assistance Professional can be an excellent step in working through the issue.

Random—and Curious— Facts about Sleep and Dreams

- The average human will spend 1/3 or their life sleeping, which equates to about 20 - 25 years over 75 Year life span.
- You can die from sleep deprivation as quickly as from food deprivation.
- Within 5 minutes of waking up, 50% of your dreams are forgotten. Within 10 minutes, 90% are gone.
- 12% of people dream only in black and white. Before color television this number was higher.
 - The 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill off Alaska, the Challenger space shuttle disaster and the Chernobyl nuclear accident have all been attributed to human errors in which sleep-deprivation played a role.
 - Teenagers need as much sleep as small children (about 10 hours) while those over 65 need the least of all (about six hours). For the average adult aged 25-55, eight hours is considered optimal .
- Feeling tired can feel normal after a short time. Those deliberately deprived of sleep for research at first noticed the effects on their alertness, mood and physical performance, but the awareness dropped off after the first few days.

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WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM A DOG ?

If a dog were your teacher, you would learn some very useful things like:

- When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
- Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
- Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
- When it's in your best interest, practice obedience.
- Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
- Take naps & stretch before rising.
- Run, romp, and play daily.
- Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.
- On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
- No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout... run right back and make friends.
- Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.
- Stop when you have had enough.
- Be loyal.
- Never pretend to be something you're not.
- If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- And MOST of all... When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.

..... Author Unknown

Tips for a Smoother Morning



School is already well underway and that means that the early-morning scramble is underway, too. Most of us try to solve the morning hassle by getting our children to change their habits but working on our own behaviors is much easier and will likely yield better results.

Here are some tips to try to keep the mornings calm:

1. **Get enough sleep yourself.** If you are good at putting the kids to sleep at a decent hour, you need to be just as disciplined with yourself. It can be tempting to stay up late, to enjoy the peace and quiet, but 6:00 a.m. comes fast, and being overtired makes the morning much tougher.
2. **Sing.** As goofy as it sounds, it's hard both to sing and to maintain a grouchy

mood, and it sets a happy tone for everyone. Even if you are tone deaf, your audience might find your singing a source of great amusement !

3. **Say "no" only when it really matters.** Wear a bright red shirt with bright orange pants and bright green shoes? Sure. As Samuel Johnson said, "All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle."
4. **Get organized the night before.** It's so hard to take the trouble to wrangle all the stuff together the night before, but it really pays off. Those last-minute dashes for homework sheets or empty paper-towel rolls are hard to bear with equanimity.

5. **Have a precise routine.** This sounds counter-intuitive, and it might not work for everyone, but some families have a NASA-like countdown to get to school. At 7:00 a.m., all sit down to breakfast. At 7:20, time to get dressed. 7:40, time to leave for the walk to school. Knowing these exact times keeps kids moving and stops them from repeating, "Just a minute, just a minute."

6. **Caffeine.** If you need your caffeine, make sure you can get your caffeine!

7. **Jump!** Here's a new resolution to try. Yes, just jump up and down a few times. It will make you feel more energetic, lighthearted, and silly—a great tone to start the day.

Many parents don't get to spend that much time with their kids during the week, and a big part of that time is during the morning. You can make changes so that it can become good family time.

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..is a short term confidential counseling service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life.

Our experienced counselors are available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.

