

Rhythm of Life

Week 1: Sleep Rhythms

Rhythm is defined as the space of time between beats. It includes patterns of repetition but also variation. Living with healthy rhythms, be it the rhythms we follow or create, is vital for maintaining a happy, active, and productive life.

Sleep is one type of rhythm that is just as important to our overall health as diet and exercise. A good night's rest can improve brain performance, mood, and physical health, like repairing tissues and boosting the immune system. In contrast, poor sleep patterns can do us more harm than we may think. Short-term effects include slower reaction times, fatigue, and irritability, while long-term impacts include increased chances of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and cancer.¹

When taking a look at what goes on in the body during quality rest, the critical role of sleep becomes clearer. During deep sleep, the brain's waste management (glymphatic) system flushes away debris, which may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.² For the immune system, sleep releases cytokines, proteins that help fight infection and inflammation.³ And more generally throughout the body, sleep increases the production of proteins that are the building blocks of cell growth and repair. How much quality sleep is needed for these benefits? The optimal amount of sleep for adults is 7-8 hours each night. Teenagers need 9-10 hours, and school-aged children may need 10 hours or more.³

Tips for better sleep:

- Limit caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol
- Avoid eating late at night
- Reduce daytime naps
- Exercise regularly
- Block out light and minimize noise
- Turn off electronic devices an hour before bedtime
- Make and stick to a sleep schedule — get in a rhythm of going to bed and waking up at consistent times



"Sleep, being a fundamental daily behavior, holds significant potential – if we enhance our sleep patterns on a daily basis, the cumulative effect on our health cannot be underestimated."

—Dr. Soomi Lee

1. <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/10/02/sleeping-less-than-6-hours-may-raise-risk-of-cancer-even-death>

2. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/sleep-well-and-reduce-your-risk-of-dementia-and-death-2021050322508>

3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/insomnia/expert-answers>