

The Connection Between



SLEEP & PRODUCTIVITY

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A Rested Mind Needs More Than a Good Night's Sleep

I'm Connie Ragen Green and I never understood insomnia and the devastating effect the lack of sleep could have on our lives until I experienced it myself. No longer do I joke that "I was going to have insomnia but I slept right through it" because that is not funny at all. This report aims to explain the importance of sleep on our lives. I'm a time management and productivity expert and thought this information would be valuable to you. Let's get started...

We are able to concentrate and focus when our minds are rested. This means more than just getting a good night's sleep (although that is important).

There are two types of distractions that affect our state of mind and our ability to be productive: External and Internal.

External distractions are things like loud music, sudden noises, a radio program, a television program, vehicle noises in the parking lot, children laughing in the backyard, the weather, and all things outside of ourselves that catch our attention. Our minds are no longer rested when we fight against these distractions or when we continuously go back and forth from our work to the distraction. It is easier to combat these external distractions and gain better concentration and focus when we are well rested physically.

Internal distractions get us off track by thoughts in our own heads. And usually, this is because our brain is tired. If you have set aside a block of time to complete a number of tasks that require a lot of "thinking", chances are good you found it difficult to concentrate after some time had passed. Just as our arm and leg muscles get tired from overuse, so does our brain. This type of distraction is more difficult to gain control over, but it can be done. It just takes practice.

To get a mental reset so you are more productive throughout the day, here are a few tactics that have been proven to work:

- **Set a timer.** Before you begin the work, set a timer for one hour so that you can get the work done and then leave your computer or desk and take a break when the timer goes off. During that break, walk around the office, drink some water, stretch, relax. This will refresh your mind and your body and ready to concentrate when you return to your work.
- **Practice meditation.** Count your breaths 1 through 10 (inhale, one, exhale, two, inhale, three and so on) and then start over when you get to 10. Every time you realize that you've been distracted, bring your attention back to the breath. It is difficult to do consistently without getting distracted, but it will get easier the more you do it.
- **Imagine yourself relaxed and rested.** Take a couple of deep breaths and stretch. Focus your attention on your body and how relaxed it is. With a bit practice, you will experience your mind getting focused and the distractions are gone.

- **This too shall pass.** Respond to the distracting thought as something that is there and then gone. Remind yourself that any thought that stays must pass eventually and by simply saying “This too shall pass” you are encouraging that distraction to move on.

A rested mind makes it easier to focus and resist distractions in our everyday lives. Let's cover some issues caused by lack of sleep and how resting your mind and getting plenty of sleep is beneficial to you.

The Amount of Sleep You Get Has a Big Impact on Your Mind

Getting the right amount of sleep means your mind is alert and you are able to make better decisions and be more productive throughout the day. Lack of sleep affects your judgment, your work performance, your mood, and your safety. It prevents you from thinking clearly, keeping your emotions on an even keel, and completing the tasks you need to get done.

What is meant by lack of sleep?

While there is no specific number of hours of sleep that works for everyone, there is a number that will work for you. And when you are not getting enough sleep, you can feel “foggy”. Here are three reasons why that foggy happens:

1. **Lack of sleep slows down your thought processes.** Sleep deprivation leads to lower alertness and concentration. It is more difficult to focus and pay attention, so you are more easily confused. It also impairs judgment. Making decisions is more difficult because you can't assess situations as well and pick the right behavior.
2. **Lack of sleep impairs memory.** When you are sleepy, you may forget and misplace things. The inability to focus and concentrate caused by sleepiness further weakens memory.
3. **Lack of sleep makes learning difficult.** Because you cannot focus as well, it is more difficult to pick up information, so you cannot learn efficiently. It also affects memory, which is essential to learning.

Slowed reaction time

In a 2009 study done with cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point, researchers from the University of Texas in Austin found that sleep deprivation hampered

information-integration. This is a function of the mind that relies heavily on split-second, gut-feeling decisions. Slowed reaction time resulted in bad decisions being made and the inability to avoid accidents and injury.

Good sleep equals a good mind

A good night's sleep is when you awaken alert and ready to face the day with enough energy to get you to breakfast, then lunch, then dinner. Your mind is alert. You can recall memories, facts, information, names, and instances quickly. You are able to understand a problem and think of a solution with confidence. You communicate clearly with others, whether with text or email or verbally. You have a sense of control over your ability to concentrate and focus on what is in front of you. And, you are able to learn something new and retain it for use on another day. Ultimately, good sleep gives you a good mind to work with and results in you being more productive each day.

Now let's discover some pitfalls of lack of sleep.

Lack of Sleep Can Be Costly

Mistakes at work and in your personal life can be costly. Mistakes can range from something as simple as misplacing a file to something more serious such as an accident. Lack of sleep affects your judgment and ability to react quickly, making it a reason that is often used to explain why mistakes occurred.

Mistakes at Work

Numerous sleep studies and scientific research have been done regarding workforce safety and costs of employees not being productive. With regard to sleep, research says that a lack of sleep among the U.S. workforce is costing approximately \$411 billion and losing 1.2 million working days per year. The reason for these costs ranges from employees not coming in to work, to employees making mistakes on the job. If you are a business owner or a manager, the mistakes you make can range from miscommunicating your expectations of your staff to writing the wrong numbers on a ledger sheet.

Accidents happen because of lack of sleep. Impaired judgment, reduced reaction times, "foggy" thinking all can cause costly accidents. Those accidents can be small injuries like a cut to a hand or foot, or they can cause death as in a vehicle or industrial accident. These are costly financially in terms of hospital and healthcare but more importantly, they are costly in terms of human life.

Simple mistakes like putting the wrong address on a proposal to a potential customer, or saying the wrong name to the person on the telephone are embarrassing, costly, and so easily avoided by getting the proper amount of sleep.

Many people work in teams and a growing body of research shows that sleep loss affects team performance. Studies have found that sleep deprivation hurts team decision-making, decision time, accuracy, and problem-solving.

Personal Life

A consequence of the lack of sleep is the impairment of social skills and relationships. Damage can be done to the quality of both personal and professional relationships. It can undermine the trust, teamwork, and cooperation that families enjoy at home.

Lack of sleep interferes with and undermines individual and group behavior:

- **Emotional reactivity.** Lack of sleep increases emotional reactivity, making people short-tempered, quick to judge, and more emotionally volatile. The cost of hurt feelings is difficult to measure, but it is real.
- **Empathy.** Lack of sleep hinders your ability to process emotional information, making it difficult for you to be in tune with how others are feeling, and more likely to miss signals you would normally catch, which results in conflict and negative reactions.
- **Self-perception.** Sleep loss compromises our own perceptions of self and our ability to function. It becomes difficult to judge just how much fatigue is affecting personal performance. And with lack of judgment comes risky behavior.

The Connection Between Sleep and Productivity

Getting the proper amount of sleep each night results in you being more alert and productive each day. Just look at the ways that getting enough sleep can improve your performance.

You Recover from Distractions Faster

When you are sleep deprived, feeling groggy, or feeling sluggish, it is much more difficult to refocus on a task after a disruption. Imagine being interrupted by loud music or shouting from the street, leaving your task to investigate, then coming back and trying to refocus. If you are

sleep deprived, it takes more time to refocus your attention, and even then, you are more likely to not be truly focused and alert. Whereas when you are rested and alert, you can easily return to your task at hand and get your mind on the work that needs to be done.

You Prevent Burnout

Lack of sleep, usually less than six hours each night for the average adult, is one of the best predictors of job burnout. If you are forcing yourself to work each day on less sleep than you need to be at your best, it will catch up to you in the form of physical, emotional or mental exhaustion. And soon you will doubt your competence and the value of your work. Whereas when you do get your optimal amount of sleep each night, over the same amount of time you will be increasing your confidence in your ability to do good work because you will have been consistently producing work that you are proud of.

You Make Better Decisions

When you have slept well, you improve your ability to make accurate and fast decisions by 4%. This may not sound like much, but every little bit helps! And if you continue to sleep well and make better decisions, it will result in work that you are confident is your best work.

Your Memory Will Improve

Over more than a century of research has established the fact that sleep is a factor in memory. Sleep actually triggers changes in the brain that solidify memories—strengthening connections between brain cells and transferring information from one brain region to another. This means that getting enough rest is key to retaining what you have learned during the day. It also means that you are better able to process what you have learned, resulting in better recall and the ability to use what you learned during the days ahead.

You Will Make Fewer Mistakes

Drowsy driving results in missing stop signs. Lack of sleep means you cannot think quickly and respond slower to disruption. This means you cannot process outside distractions well enough to avoid injury or making mistakes. Get enough rest and you are less likely to make these mistakes or miss a stop sign while driving. You will be able to respond quickly and accurately to disruption.

Clearly, there is a connection between sleep and productivity. Being aware of this you can now focus on improving your sleep habits and becoming more productive.

Preventing Burnout by Getting Enough Sleep

Being productive, getting things done, feeling accomplished are all good things if you have good health habits. But, if you lack good sleep habits, you will soon feel stressed and run down. Over time, the stress will show itself as fatigue and overwhelm, which will result in burnout. To prevent this from happening, get enough sleep.

What Is Burnout?

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain task in the first place.

While burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, it isn't the same as too much stress. It is a state of being that is ***not enough***. Burnout means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout often don't see any hope of positive change in their situations. If excessive stress is like drowning in responsibilities, burnout is being all dried up. And while you are often aware of being under a lot of stress, you may not notice burnout when it happens.

Exhaustion and fatigue from lack of sleep are two of many causes of burnout. They are also something you can change now to prevent burnout.

How You Can Prevent Burnout with Sleep

Sleeping well has a direct effect on your mental health. To prevent burnout, it is important that you understand how simple changes to your daytime and bedtime habits can have an impact on how well you sleep, and leave you feeling mentally sharp, emotionally balanced, and full of energy all day long.

Know your body's natural sleep-wake cycle

- Try to go to sleep and get up at the same time every day.
- Avoid sleeping in—even on weekends.
- Be smart about napping and don't nap longer than 30 minutes.

Control your exposure to light

- Expose yourself to bright sunlight in the morning.
- Spend more time outside during daylight.
- Let as much natural light into your home or workspace as possible

Exercise during the day

- The more vigorously you exercise, the more powerful the sleep benefits. But even light exercise—such as walking for just 10 minutes a day—improves sleep quality.

Eat and drink in healthy ways

- Limit caffeine and nicotine.
- Avoid big meals at night.
- Avoid alcohol before bed.
- Avoid drinking too many liquids in the evening.
- Cut back on sugary foods and refined carbs.

Wind down and clear your head

- Practice deep breathing.
- Meditate.
- Use visualization – think of a peaceful, restful place.
- Listen to soft music.

As you can see, it's important to not only get plenty of sleep, but to get quality sleep as well. If you're feeling sluggish, having a hard time getting through your day or feel like your work is slacking and you're not being productive, it may be time to assess your sleep habits and focus on getting better sleep.

To Your Massive Success and Productivity,

Connie Ragen Green

About The Author

Connie Ragen Green is a bestselling author, international speaker, and online marketing strategist who is dedicating her life to serving others as they build and grow successful and lucrative online businesses. Her background includes working as a classroom teacher for twenty years, while simultaneously working in real estate. In 2006 she left it all behind to come online, and the rest is history.

She makes her home in two cities in southern California; Santa Clarita in the desert and Santa Barbara at the beach. In addition to her writing and work online, Connie consults and strategizes with several major corporations and some non-profits, as well as volunteering with groups such as the international service organization Rotary, the Boys & Girls Clubs, Benevolent & Protective Order of Elk's (BPOE), the women's business organization Zonta, and several other charitable groups.

As the 2016 recipient of the Merrill Hoffman Award, presented to Connie by the Santa Barbara Rotary Club, being honored with this award has strengthened her resolve to serve others around the world in any way she is able to by using her gifts, talents, and experiences in a positive and sincere manner.

Please pick up one or more of my books as a way to get started on the path to online entrepreneurship. If you're not sure where to begin, simply hit "reply" to any of my email messages and I will respond to your questions promptly.

My popular books can be found at <http://ConnieRagenGreenBooks.com>

