

Your Perfect Night's Sleep

10 Steps to Getting the Sleep You Dream Of



ELEVATE
CHIROPRACTIC

A Life By Design Centre

Oh man, it's only Wednesday afternoon. When is this week going to end? I'm tired, I can't really think all that straight and my coffee better kick in soon. The pile of work on my desk continues to grow, but I can't seem to get anything productive done.

If I'm this tired, maybe I should skip my workout and just go home and put my feet up (like that's a possibility!). I'm dreaming of my couch and a little Netflix right now. But the reality is that tonight I've got 3 hours of running the kids back and forth to hockey, gymnastics and soccer. When is it the weekend again?...

Sound familiar? I know not everyone has kids at home or drinks coffee, but you get the general idea, and I bet you can relate.

We've been warned about things like financial debt, but no one warned me about sleep debt. It does exist, and it totally wrecks your "health account".

Before I jump ahead too much, let's start this story from the beginning.

I used to think that health was just about being symptom free. In fact, TRUE health is so much MORE than that, which is why I'm so excited to have you as part of the Life By Design movement at Elevate Chiropractic Centre.

At Elevate Chiropractic, we believe that every person is designed to be healthy, as long as they have the right information, support and action steps.

We are here to give you that.

Despite the fact that in the last 50 years, we spend more money on health care, have more access to the latest research and technology, have more qualified doctors and more drug prescriptions than EVER before in history...

...humans have been getting sicker and sicker.

Our mission at Elevate Chiropractic is to change that so you can experience the fullest life with the greatest potential.

"Fullest potential" may mean...

- Being able to **play with your kids or grandkids** whenever you want
- Getting **great quality sleeps** EVERY night
- Having **the kind of energy** it takes to keep up with the fast pace of life
- Being a **great athlete** or running a personal best
- Or perhaps just being able to **get out of bed without wincing in pain**

Everyone is different. So everyone's *strategies* for health will be different.

That's why, at Elevate Chiropractic, we walk you through the body's *requirements* for being YOUR best as an integrated part of your care.

And the best part...

You don't have to figure it all out by yourself. We will take you by the hand and lead you through the muddy waters of quick-fixes and pills that are out there. We will steer you through the continually changing chaos of nutritional fads and outdated advice. We will show you the clear path through exercise programs that don't work. And we will take you directly to the proven and simple tools that empower YOU to create long-term health from the inside out.

You were designed to be exceptionally healthy. Now let's make that happen.

Dr. Craig and Dr. Shawna

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Do you believe that humans are designed to be healthy? Or do you believe that we are programmed to become sick and die?

More importantly, do you believe YOU were designed to be healthy or to live a life of progressive sickness and deterioration?

The truth is, every human – including YOU – is designed to be healthy as their default state. This is great news because it means that everything you need to be healthy is within your grasp!

So why are North Americans getting sicker and sicker despite knowing more and more about health?

Society is becoming increasingly symptom-oriented and focused on quick fix solutions. As a result, lifestyle diseases have become the biggest killers of our time.

Now don't get me wrong...crisis and medical care are absolutely CRUCIAL, and we're blessed to have countless lives saved every day because of it.

But **it does not create health.**

Health is created by following a few simple principles:

1. You were designed to be healthy.

You were created and born with an incredible intelligence and ability to adapt to your environment. Your body is constantly adapting and changing to allow you to function, grow and develop...AND heal!

2. Your body has basic requirements for health.

There aren't many fundamental requirements, but if you don't meet them, your body will have a difficult time achieving optimal health. These requirements are:

- Proper fuel
- Proper movement
- Rest
- Healthy mind
- Proper nerve supply

3. Life By Design allows you to create the best strategies to fulfill those requirements.

If these requirements are necessary to be healthy, it makes sense that we place great value on strategies that will fulfill those 5 requirements.

Unfortunately, very few people actively provide their bodies with these requirements, so it's no wonder people are so sick.

Don't get me wrong...medical care is absolutely incredible in times of crisis. However, on a day-to-day basis, drugs and surgery are virtually useless if you're not providing your body with what it needs ie. its fundamental requirements.

It's funny, we seem to understand this idea so well when it comes to nature. If a plant is brown and dying, we will first evaluate whether or not the plant is getting its basic requirements for life. Does it have enough sunlight? Is it getting enough water? Does the soil perhaps need changing?

The question we are really asking is **"what is the plant missing?"**

Funny, we don't typically ask that same question when it comes to ourselves.

At Elevate Chiropractic, we use the Life By Design principles of identifying the requirements for good health and then recommending strategies that will allow you to create amazing health from the inside out.

Why is this so great?

Simple. Because when you create enough health in your body, you don't have to worry about illness and disease!

Today, we're talking about the third requirement listed above...rest. In other words, this article is about SLEEP.

"Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together"

Thomas Dekker

Lack of sleep is a problem that has reached epic proportions in North America. Insomnia is rated the #1 health-related problem in the U.S. right now. Think about how many people you know who have trouble sleeping!

It's a HUGE deal. Why? A recent CDC report indicated that over 12 million adults over age 20 in the US are currently using prescription drugs to get sleep.

One in every 6 adults is diagnosed with a sleep disorder, and most of them reported using some kind of sleep aid.

Yikes!

To make matters worse, the number of adults using sleeping pills DOUBLED between 2000 and 2004.

And, the number of children aged 1-19 taking prescription sleep medication has risen over 85%.

To be honest, this information is not all that surprising. Our culture is becoming more and more plugged in, fast-paced and working in 10-second sound bytes with every year that passes.

I recently heard a friend say (hopefully jokingly) "I can sleep when I'm dead".

The problem is that sleep has become totally UNDER-VALUED. Not only do we discount the importance of sleep, but we have actually forgotten how to get it!

WHY IS SLEEP SO IMPORTANT?

The bottom line is that sleep is vital to all body functions. Every one. ***Without sleep, you would die of sleep deprivation before you would die of starvation.***

So how has sleep benefitted you lately?

Consider these...

1. Immune function

Your immune system is at its strongest while you sleep. Lack of sleep actually weakens your immune response leaving you open to whatever is currently going around.

2. Growth Hormone

This hormone is produced in large quantities while you sleep and allows for cellular and genetic growth, repair and healing. Lack of sleep makes it more difficult for your systems to repair and regenerate and *contribute to premature aging.*

3. Mental Emotional Health

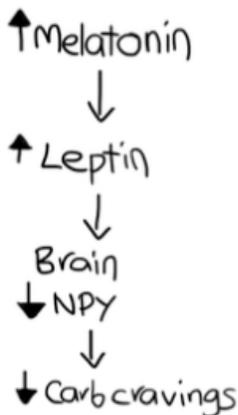
Insomnia reduces the activity of the pre-frontal cortex, which is an area of the brain critical for emotion and complex behaviour. Being tired makes us way more susceptible to depression, anxiety and a variety of other mental health challenges.

4. Inflammation

This is a big buzz word right now, and if you understand what this is in your body, you will understand why. Cellular inflammation is a hallmark of most of our modern lifestyle diseases like heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes and many digestive disorders (like inflammatory bowel syndrome). Lack of sleep results in increased cortisol (stress hormone) levels, which creates low-grade inflammation throughout your body and increases your propensity toward these lifestyle diseases.

5. Memory and Problem Solving

How many people have you heard say that as they get older, they have a harder time remembering things? Sleep is vital for the formation of memories and the retention of information. Sleep deprivation negatively impacts short term memory and the regeneration of nerve cells.



6. Weight Loss

Sleep deprivation results in the suppression of a newly discovered hormone called LEPTIN - the satiety hormone (and weight loss' best friend!). Leptin shuts down hunger. Without it, you're hungrier and crave all the worst foods. Just 1 night with 5 or fewer hours of sleep impairs our ability to regulate normal appetite and cravings. Not to mention the simple fact that if we sleep less, we're awake more and therefore have more hours of the day to raid the fridge!

FACTORS THAT DISRUPT SLEEP

The normal sleep-wake cycle is primarily controlled by the hormones cortisol and melatonin.

Cortisol is released during the day when the sun is out. It's a stress hormone. Cortisol helps to prepare us for the normal activities of life. It wanes as the day wears on in preparation for rest and sleep.

Conversely, melatonin is our sleep hormone. Melatonin comes out when the sun goes to sleep and cortisol levels drop. Melatonin prepares us for sleep and repair.

Most of the physical repair to our bodies happens between 11pm and 2am. Psychological repair and memory formation primarily occur between 2am and 6am.

The actual mechanism of sleep-wake cycles is beyond the scope of this ebook. The main thing to remember is that cortisol and melatonin work together to control sleep and repair. Therefore, anything that affects these hormones has the potential to affect sleep.

*"Dear Sleep,
I'm sorry I hated you so much when I was little.
Now I can't get enough of you!
Sincerely,
Me"*

Take a look at these most popular sleep disrupters and see how many apply to you.

Bright Lights

Sun and therefore bright lights keep cortisol levels high and suppress melatonin. Bright lights will fool your body into thinking it is still daytime, and your body will not ready itself properly for rest and repair. Not only is it difficult to fall asleep, but the amount of repair that can happen during sleep will be hampered.

I think of this in particular with children who like to have lights on in their rooms at night. A small nightlight is acceptable, but anything over about 7 Watts can impair melatonin secretion leading to tiredness and inability to create optimal cellular repair and regeneration.

Stimulant Intake

Coffee, sugar and tobacco are all stimulants that trigger the release of cortisol. They trick your body into thinking it's still "awake" time.

Coffee has a half life of 6 hours. That means if you drink a coffee at 2pm to help you get through the afternoon and it has 300 mg of caffeine, you still have 150 mg of caffeine in your body 6 hours later at 8pm when it's time to start "powering down". Worse than that, 6 hours past that at 2am (when your body is supposed to be in its optimal repair time), you still have 75 mg of caffeine circulating through your blood. That's still enough caffeine to suppress your melatonin production and keep cortisol levels higher than they should be.

Sugar creates fluctuating blood sugar levels. A big increase in sugar triggers a large drop in sugar levels within a few hours after eating. This drop in blood sugar levels is

perceived by the body as an emergency. The body responds by releasing the stress hormone cortisol, which in turn suppresses melatonin. Poor sleep is often the result.

Electromagnetic Pollution

This is a huge deal these days. Your body functions best with a certain electromagnetic frequency. This frequency can be thrown off by other electromagnetic fields (EMF's) in the environment and within our own homes. TV's, computers, electrical appliances and WiFi all create EMF's that can change our own. The body perceives this as a stressor and releases cortisol in response.

Dehydration

Most of us do not drink enough water. As you can imagine, your body perceives this as a stress and increased cortisol levels are the result.

Burning the Midnight Oil

Although people's need for sleep can vary, you cannot train yourself to require less sleep. Even just a few late nights can affect your healthy sleep and result in a sleep debt. The body will respond by pushing back the release of melatonin and sustain the production of cortisol in anticipation of regular activity instead of sleep.

Worst of all, your body will not compress the healing and repair cycle to fit into your shortened night of sleep; you simply will miss out on some of the critical regeneration you would get during a full night of sleep.

In short, anything that increases cortisol levels will suppress melatonin resulting in an inability to get a good night's sleep.

YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!

10 STEPS TO A PERFECT NIGHT'S SLEEP

1. Know your sleep number.

Most people assume that 8 hours is the perfect number for sleep. For some that's true. Most experts agree that the average healthy adult requires 7-9 hours.

Sleep happens in 90 minute cycles. In each cycle, we pass through the various stages of sleep, ranging from light to deep sleep and including both REM (or dream) sleep and NREM (non-REM) sleep. We typically have 5 cycles of sleep per night.

Five cycles of 90 minutes is 450 minutes of sleep, or 7.5 hours. As I said, there is some variation in ideal sleep depending on the individual.

In order to know your perfect sleep number, decide when your ideal wake up time is (because your waking time is usually more concrete than your bed time, being dependent on work or children waking up). Then subtract 7.5 hours and make that your bed time. Go to bed at that time, wake up 7.5 hours later and see how you feel.

You will know if 7.5 is the right number if you wake up just a few minutes before your alarm goes off. If you wake long before your alarm, or if you are still very tired waking up, you may need less or more sleep. Adjust your bed time accordingly until you hit that refreshed feeling just before wake up.

2. Go to sleep and wake up at the same times consistently.

Even on weekends. I know, that's the last thing most of us want to hear but it's one of the most common habits of great sleepers. Going to bed later and sleeping in later on weekends wreaks havoc with our sleep hormones and impairs our ability to get a good night's rest during the week.

3. No caffeine after 2pm.

Remember caffeine's half life? Coffee can be a major reason people have trouble getting to sleep. Because the half life is so long, you may not realize that a mid-afternoon sip is causing the problem.

Coffee is not the only culprit, as you probably know. Sodas (including diet), black tea and green tea are all high in caffeine. Even chocolate can have a high enough caffeine content to affect sleep. And do NOT consume energy drinks.

4. Avoid alcohol within 4 hours of bedtime.

Although we often think that alcohol helps us fall asleep better, it can significantly affect deep sleep brain wave activity. That means you may (or may not) fall asleep, but you can have trouble STAYING asleep.

5. Make sure your vitamin D levels are healthy and supplement if necessary.

There is a significant correlation between low vitamin D levels and daytime sleepiness. If you are experiencing sluggishness or sleepiness during the day, be sure to check your vitamin D levels and consult your health care practitioner for advice on proper supplementation if they are low.

6. Make sure your bedroom is as dark as possible.

Even small amounts of light such as turning on the light to go the bathroom in the middle of the night can cause cortisol levels to rise and melatonin to fall. This tricks your body into thinking it's daytime and time to wake up.

7. Avoid all sources of blue light.

Blue light is a specific wavelength of light that is emitted by computer screens, cell phones, and other digital devices. Blue light stimulates the brain, making it harder to relax into sleep. It also raises cortisol and suppresses melatonin. Dim all household lights within 1-2 hours of sleep time.

8. Exercise.

It's no surprise that in studies comparing sleep with exercise exertion, people who exercised vigorously as opposed to lightly or even moderately slept significantly better. Not only are regular exercisers more physically tired, they have a healthy outlet for their cortisol levels, helping to keep them in check.

9. Say "good morning" to the sun.

Since light has one of the largest, most significant effects on sleep cycles and circadian rhythms, taking at least 15 minutes to go outside and be in daylight has a major impact on regulating sleep. It's kind of like a reset to the regulation of melatonin. Saying good morning to the sun tells your body it's time to begin a new day, and resets your 24-hour circadian clock.

10. Get your spine and nervous system checked by a Chiropractor and optimize your brain/body connection.

What controls your hormones? What runs your circadian rhythm and sleep cycles? The system that runs every other system in your body... THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

What structure protects your nervous system? THE SPINE. If your brain-body connection is impaired somehow, your brain cannot adequately control and monitor what's going on in your body. Getting your spine and nervous system checked by a chiropractor can ensure that your nervous system is clear to do its job, and your body can function at its best.

You experience life through your nervous system.

Your nervous system controls every one of the over 70 trillion cells in your body. It regulates every single body process. It controls each and every organ system in a harmonious and unified way. It allows you to feel, think and move the way you do and express yourself to your highest potential.

People innately know that having a healthy connection between the brain and body is what allows them to live an ELEVATED life. Yet very few people realize that the nervous system has to be protected and cared for or how to do it.

Just like you see the dentist to have your teeth checked and the optometrist to have your eyes checked, seeing a Chiropractor to have your spine and nervous system checked is part of living a healthy lifestyle.

Many people believe that Chiropractors are back doctors, spine doctors or bone doctors. But Chiropractic is none of the above. Chiropractors in a Life By Design office have one objective - to optimize and maintain the health of the nervous system so you can heal, sleep, move, and simply be the best you possible. Period.

Now what?

1. Choose 1 of the 10 steps above and commit to trying it for 30 days.
2. If you haven't had your Brain-Body connection checked by a Chiropractor recently, call the office to book NOW. 905.841.0400.

If you have any questions or comments, email us at:

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