Signs of Sleep Deprivation

No one can squeeze more hours into a day, but we certainly try. Unfortunately, too many of us extend the hours of our day by cutting back on sleep. There are many health and safety reasons to consider if you are not getting sufficient sleep. Here are the warning signs telling you that you are overdoing it and probably have been for some time.

You Need an Alarm Clock to Wake Up

If you can’t wake up on time without electronic help, this is a sign that you’re sleep deprived. It’s prudent to set alarm clocks just in case, but if you’re jolted out of a deep sleep every workday or feel the need to repeatedly hit the snooze button, you’re not getting enough sleep. Do you sleep late on weekends when if you went to bed at your usual time? Make-up sleep is a sure sign of sleep deprivation.

Impaired Decision Making

Chronic sleep deprivation impairs our ability to make minor decisions. The decisions could be as inconsequential as where to sit in a movie theatre, what movie to see, or whether to take a window or an aisle seat on a flight. Difficulty ordering from a menu, choosing what clothes to wear, what errands to run, and what order in which to do things are also common examples of impaired minor decision making. Trivial decisions have a way of appearing to be profoundly important when we are overly tired.

An inability to make important decisions is just as common for sleep deprived individuals. This can manifest as a propensity to freeze or panic when faced with highly stressful situations. Delaying major decisions like firing a subordinate when they clearly aren’t a good fit for the job or leaving a

job you’re unhappy with are common. It takes a lot of mental energy to look for a new job or fire an employee and replace them. Chronically exhausted people are using everything they have just to get by. They are often caught in a holding pattern, putting off any major decision.

Impulsivity

There is another form of impairment besides an inability to make decisions. Some aren’t paralyzed. Instead, they have lost the ability to think things through and rush into making major decisions on impulse, without thinking through the consequences.

In addition to decision-making, they will react impulsively to aggravating stimuli, sudden desires, or other emotions.

Irritability

We all have our moments, and it can be hard to tell if the real reason is the people around us, or our lack of sleep. If you ask the people around you if you’re often grouchy, you may not get an honest answer. If you ask yourself, you may be kidding yourself. Ask your spouse or partner, he or she will know if you’re irritable.

Your Pillow Looks More Attractive Than Your Partner

Lack of sleep can lower sex hormones and increase stress hormones, which of course further lowers the sex drive. This is more noticeable in the over 30 crowd, because they have already passed their sexual peak, but it can happen to anyone who’s exhausted all the time; young or old.

You Get Sick All The Time

How many times have you been sick in the past year? If you can’t remember, but you know it was a lot, then you probably have an impaired immune system. Many people blame getting sick on germs, and though germs play a factor, with an optimal immune response we rarely, if ever, get sick. Frequent colds and bouts with the flu are a warning sign that you aren’t as healthy as you could be. Our immune system needs adequate rest to function at optimal levels.

You Honestly Can’t Recall

If you don’t know what happened to your memory these days, lack of sleep may be the culprit. All of the mnemonic tricks in the world pale in comparison to adequate rest.

Inability to Concentrate

Similar to an impaired memory, our ability to concentrate is dependent on adequate sleep. Sleep deprivation can lead to lower test scores, reduced productivity at work, and increased distractibility. This also includes lackadaisical staring off into space that sleepy people tend to do.

Clumsy

If you don’t know what happened to your sense of coordination, lack of sleep is quite possibly the problem. Sleep deprived individuals are more clumsy than those who are legally drunk. Video gamers take note: pulling all-nighters makes you less coordinated.

Nodding Off or Micro Sleeps

When we don’t give our bodies needed rest, our bodies will

steal it from us. At inopportune times, we fade out, and we don’t necessarily even know that it happened to us. Over half of American drivers have admitted to nodding off at the wheel, and most of them simply keep driving. If you’re fading out during the day, your body is trying to tell you something.

Conclusion

What makes us more clumsy, drinking more than the legal limit? Or being awake for 19 hours? If you think the answer is staying awake, you’re right. Most of us wouldn’t go to work drunk, but far too many of us go to work sleep drunk and seriously impaired.

Many of us feel the need to push ourselves beyond what we can get done in a day. When something has to give way, we cut into our sleep. But all we are doing is creating a cycle of diminishing returns, wherein we get less and less done during the day, leading us to feel we need to stay awake longer, in order to get more done.

Pushing yourself beyond your limits can be dangerous, even fatal. Falling asleep at the wheel is the most obvious way to kill yourself through sleep deprivation, but it certainly isn’t the only way. Sleep deprivation increases our risk for a multitude of diseases including chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, chronic pain syndrome, autoimmune diseases, hypertension, obesity, and depression, to name a few.

Our bodies tell us in a multitude of ways if we have been pushing ourselves too hard. Take heed and listen to the warning signs.

Recommended Supplements:

- Shillington’s Nerve Sedative Formula
- L-Tryptophan
- Stress B-Complex – Thorne Research

- Basic B-Complex – Thorne Research
- SleepThru – Gaia Herbs
- Sleep & Relax – Gaia Herbs
- Shillington's Cal-Calm Tea
- Skullcap Herb – Gaia Herbs
- Vitamin D
- More supplements for insomnia

Further Reading:

- *The Glymphatic System – How Insomnia Leads to a Filthy Mind*
- *Pure Sleep – 11 Tips for Better Sleep*
- *Why We Need Sleep*
- *Natural Remedies for Insomnia*
- *Thyroid Disease Epidemic – How is Yours Doing?*
- *Natural Remedies for Adrenal Fatigue*
- *Mental Health, Physical Health & B Vitamins – Nature's Valium*
- *Earthing – Touching Earth*
- *Earthing – Ground Your Body for Optimal Health*

Sources:

- The Seven Pillars of Health, by Don Colbert M.D.
- *5 Signs You're Sleep Deprived* – Prevention
- *Drowsy Driving* – Radcliffe Institute For Advanced Study Harvard University