

Empower

Insights

Is lack of sleep sabotaging your health?

by Catherine Lai , International Health Coach, Mentor and
Natural Health Specialist at Feeling Amazing Again.



Sleep – how much you have and the quality of it – matters so much more than most people realise.

Did you know that insufficient sleep can easily sabotage your health and any health goals you might have.?

Today I'd like to share exactly why it matters so much and what to do about it.

SLEEP AND WEIGHT

Sleep and weight are intimately related. If you are not getting enough sleep on a regular basis, you are setting yourself up to be hungrier, eat more, weigh more, and have a harder time losing weight.

It's not all in your head.

Scientists now know that, if you are consistently surviving on too little sleep (that's less than seven hours of good sleep per night), you're not going to be functioning at your best, focusing properly, or thinking creatively. The cherry on top is that you are also sabotaging any attempts to take control of healthy eating and your weight.

Sleep deprivation causes hormone imbalance, and I'm not talking about PMT, but the hormones that directly affect your feelings of hunger. Ghrelin (the hunger hormone that makes you feel more hungry) and leptin (the satiety hormone that tells you when you've had enough to eat) are majorly disrupted when you are not sleeping enough.

So, after a night of lousy sleep, if you feel like you need to eat a banquet, it's not all in your head but rather in your hormones. The feast you desire is going to be filled with high-carb, starchy foods and not the lovely healthy ones you might otherwise choose.



STRESS AND YOUR HORMONES

Lack of sleep also messes with stress hormones, and stress messes with your sleep. It's a vicious circle and one particularly good reason why it is so important to take the time to unwind before hitting the sack.

Cortisol is one of the main stress hormones. It should follow a specific pattern throughout the day, starting low (having just got up from a 'restful sleep'), rising to a peak in the morning to get you out of bed, and gradually tailing off towards evening time. Prolonged periods of stress can create an imbalance in this daily rhythm that may lead to cortisol levels being high come night-time. Typically, this would leave you feeling tired but wired – absolutely exhausted, but your head is buzzing when you hit the pillow. Not exactly the recipe for success.

BALANCED BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS = BETTER SLEEP

The more starchy carbs you eat, the more glucose is in your blood and the higher the amount of insulin that your body needs to restore blood sugar balance. If your diet is high in starchy carbs like bread, rice, pasta, and sugars, you make more insulin, which creates blood sugar fluctuations at night, and these cause sleep disturbances.

A sugar 'crash' at night triggers a release of cortisol to wake you up at the wrong time, and this can shift you out of deep sleep into a lighter sleep phase. Moving to a way of eating that balances your blood sugar helps significantly improve the quality of your sleep.



TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

There are several things you can do (or not do) to improve your ability to sleep well. Here's a quick 'To do', and 'Don't Do' list, to help you on your way.

To Do:

- Try to go to bed at the same time every day. Your body thrives on routine.
- Keep the temperature in your bedroom comfortable; not too hot, nor too cold.
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex. This may help you completely switch off.
- Keep the bedroom completely dark, so you're not disturbed by light, which your brain detects even when your eyes are closed. Eye masks can be useful.
- Spend time outdoors to soak up the sun during the day.
- Try to take some gentle exercise every day. There is evidence that regular exercise improves restful sleep. This includes stretching and aerobic exercise. A brisk walk ticks both boxes.
- Make an effort to relax for at least 30 minutes before going to bed - a warm bath, good book, meditation.
- In winter, keep your feet and hands warm. Wear warm socks and/or mittens or gloves to bed if you struggle with cold extremities.
- Get a traditional alarm clock so your smartphone can stay out of the bedroom (see below). Better still, work out how much sleep you need by going to bed 15 minutes earlier until you find that you wake up naturally before your alarm. That's your personal sleep requirement.



To 'Not' Do

- Don't engage in stimulating activities – like playing a competitive game, watching an edge-of-the-seat film, or having an important conversation with a loved one.
- Don't forget that using smartphones and tablets can interfere with sleep because they emit the same kind of light as the morning sun. Ditch them at a fixed time each evening.
- Don't eat a heavy meal within four hours of going to bed.
- Don't drink caffeine in the afternoon – including coffee, 'normal' and green tea, and colas.
- Don't use alcohol to help you sleep. Alcohol can make sleep more disturbed.
- Don't go to bed too hungry. Have a snack before bed – a glass of your favourite type of milk is ideal.
- Try to avoid daytime naps.
- Try not to get frustrated if you can't sleep.
- Go to bed in a positive mood – "I will sleep tonight".

It's time to take action !

Make a note of what works for you and what doesn't, what went wrong or got in the way of your new sleep protection skills.

Be kind to yourself and remember that 'practice makes perfect'...long term sleep issues can take time to unwind, and it's worth taking the time to unravel them.

I wish you a heavenly sleep !





As a successful professional, have you ever considered that *your health is in fact your primary asset?*

If you're missing that spring in your step, wondering where your calm went, and finding your weekends are becoming recovery stations, then you've probably realised you've lost sight of your health. Or maybe you can feel it slowly rolling away from you?

www.feelingamazingagain.com

Book your free
1-2-1 introductory
session

Book your free introductory call for tips, facts and inspiration to start you on your health journey, and learn what I can do for you.



CATHERINE LAI

Founder & Director - Feeling Amazing Again

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COACH, MENTOR,
AND NATURAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

Catherine guides, supports, and mentors, corporate executives to reclaim their vision of a healthy life, by identifying and embedding new health habits that include; relaxation techniques, building movement and exercise into their workday, and growing their knowledge of nutritious foods. Thereby empowering them to remain energised and resilient in work and life.

ABOUT

Corporate Care Culture & Healthful High Performance for the Workplace

Catherine is an Accredited Nutrition Health Coach specialising in the creation/enhancement of corporate cultures of care, and the delivery of healthful high-performance for the workplace.

Catherine's 30 year global career leadership history gives insight and understanding of the challenges and everyday life of corporate executives, and the impact it can have to health. Also, the fine balance necessary for organisations to meet client, board and shareholder requirements, whilst ensuring staff are supported and empowered to meet work goals in a timely manner, without detracting from their overall health and well-being.

Having worked and lived in many countries, whilst embracing the culture and language of local community, Catherine ensures her programmes are culturally sensitive to diverse audiences.

Catherine works with Organisations, Teams and Individuals as follows;

Corporate Care Culture

Care Culture Programmes are founded upon Catherine's passionate belief that we all deserve to live a life that we love, and that this includes our time spent at work. Catherine's work engenders connectivity, fun, and camaraderie that explores, and identifies, ways to replenish energy and protect health.

Packages are individually tailored to organisational needs and include;

- Inspirational Talks
- Wellness Workshops
- Community Challenges

1:2:1 Health and Energy Transformation Programmes

Catherine works with individuals to explore their health ambitions, identify achievable goals, and embed new habits that enhance lifestyle and protect health.

Think mouth-watering nourishing foods, exercise that is worth getting out of bed for, and relaxation activities that fit seamlessly into new lifestyles.

CONTACT ME

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CORE COMPETENCIES

- Healthful High Performance for the Work Place
- Nutritional Health & Energy Balancing
- Building Corporate Care Cultures
- Experienced International Presenter
- ESG & Social Programmes for Organisations
- Wellness Workshops & Community Health Challenges
- Languages; English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai, French

PASSIONATE ABOUT:

-  Supporting the development of trusted, authentic, caring corporate cultures
-  Inspiring people to confidently take control of their health
-  Diversity & Inclusion that supports intercultural understanding for Global Organisations.