



FEBRUARY

self-care/self-love

WEEK 4 - SELF-CARE AS IT RELATES TO SLEEP

So, what's the big deal about sleep? Sleep is the foundation to having a good day! When you are rested, you are more apt to feel good in your body and make wise decisions. Growth hormone, otherwise known as the "anti-aging" hormone, is secreted during sleep, which stimulates tissue regeneration, detoxification, muscle building, breakdown of fat stores and normalization of blood sugar. During sleep, free radicals are scavenged in the brain, minimizing its aging process. Sleep gives us renewed vitality, a more positive outlook on life and the energy we need to reach our full potential. Long-term health depends on the regeneration that occurs during deep sleep. It's at the core of true preventive medicine.

Sleep requirements: Adults should aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. As we age, sleeping needs tend to decrease, but it's still essential for proper healing to take place. Inadequate sleep can lead to drowsiness, fatigue, decreased concentration, impaired memory, reduced stress tolerance, mood changes, irritability, muscle tension, and lowered immunity, among others.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF WITH SLEEP HABITS:

- Stick to the same bedtime most days
- Do your best to rise at the same time every morning
- Allow one night a week where you are more lax on your bed time and waking time - if this is something you desire.

Practicing self-care is recognizing that life ebbs and flows, and with that, there are times to take it easy on the routine!

- Set boundaries - if there is too much on your plate, it will be harder to accomplish all you need to and get your needed rest. If you need to start getting ready for bed at 9 PM, don't commit to evening meetings or activities that regularly keep you out later than that. It's ok to say no. This leads into the next point:
- Make a to-do list each day and aim to be finished by dinner time. Even if you're a stay-at-home mom or are retired, you have things that must be done each day. Aim to complete all tasks that you can before dinner time. After dinner, you can take a walk, do some other relaxing exercise such as light stretching or yoga, enjoy entertainment such as playing cards, board games, or watching TV. As your cortisol is dropping for the day, it's best for your level of activity and stimulation to drop as well.
- Put devices to bed at least one hour before bedtime. Many of us enjoy relaxing by watching TV and movies and that is completely fine, but it is best to not watch TV in bed and it's also best to be away from all electronics at least one hour before going to sleep.

TAKE-AWAYS

- Make a realistic plan and to-do list for each day
- Try to structure your day in accordance with your cortisol levels - more active in the morning, less active in the afternoon and evening.
- Put electronics to bed at least one hour before you.