

### Getting a Full Night's Sleep

In the winter, it's dark when your alarm goes off. It's dark and cold and getting out of bed is even harder than usual.

But like most people, you get up anyway. You start your day groggy and plow through until you fall into bed exhausted.

If you find yourself dreaming of a time when you wake up refreshed, have energy all day long, and go to sleep easily, you're not alone. More and more people struggle with exhaustion.

In many cases the culprit is sleep deprivation.

As a nation we are getting less and less sleep. The average person gets 500 fewer hours of sleep each year than 100 years ago.

And the decrease in sleep takes its toll. Short term effects of sleep deprivation include irritability, memory loss, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, blurry vision, and impaired judgment. Heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, obesity and type 2 diabetes can result from long term sleep deprivation.

Clearly, you need sleep to be healthy.

For most people, not sleeping enough can be attributed to two key problems. Some people don't allow enough time for sleep. Others want to sleep but can't.

### Schedule Time to Sleep

The most obvious way to get more sleep is simple but not easy.

Sleep more.

In today's busy world where parents work all day, attend school events all night, balance personal time with couple time, run the household and give to the community, it's easy to run out of hours in the day.

And besides the demands of work, family and community, even advocates for your personal growth demand your time. Some personal development advisors will suggest that if you just get up one hour earlier every morning, you'll have 365 extra hours every year to accomplish your goals.

But the lack of sleep catches up with you. Soon the lack of focus will defeat the extra hours you gain in the day. Time spent sick will reduce your productivity. You'll be prone to accidents and forgetfulness.

A much healthier balance is to accept that you can't do it all. Block out sleep time in your schedule before you plan other activities. If you are over age 18, allow at least 7 – 8 hours. Guard your sleep time to guarantee your body the rest it deserves.

### How to Fall Asleep at Bedtime

Some people find it hard to fall asleep. If your life is highly stimulating, your body is active, your nervous system is cranked and your emotions are on edge all day long. It's hard to turn off after you've gone 100mph.

If falling asleep is a relatively new problem, try some natural remedies. However, if your problem is chronic, talk with your doctor or acupuncturist. Once you're sure that nothing serious is going on, try natural remedies to fall asleep.

- **Essential Oils.** Essential Oils are very calming. Buy some high quality oils and put a couple drops on a cloth by your pillow. Start with Lavender or Roman Chamomile.
- **Homeopathy.** Picking a homeopathic remedy can be tricky, so it's easiest to start with a prepared blend. Ask your Health Food Store what sleep remedies they carry.
- **Acupuncture.** Visit your acupuncturist for a tune-up.
- **Herbs.** Many herbs calm the nerves and induce sleep. Herbs are usually taken as teas or tinctures. Start with Lavender, Chamomile or Valerian or ask for help choosing one at your Health Food Store.
- **Reduce noise and light.** Noise and light stimulation can make it harder to sleep. Cover your windows completely. If your bedroom is noisy, try using a white noise generator or play soothing music as you fall asleep.
- **Create a sleep routine.** Many experts say that you can train yourself to sleep by creating a bedtime ritual. Go to bed at the same time every night. No stimulants near bedtime including coffee, tea, chocolate, or stimulating activities. Take a warm bath to relax. And when you are in bed, practice a few minutes of deep breathing. Any routine done regularly will train your body to sleep.

Without enough sleep, you are susceptible to more than just discomfort and drowsiness; your health is at stake. The darkness of winter is a great time to start the habit of sleeping for health. With enough hours of restful sleep, when your alarm goes off you'll be refreshed and ready for a new day

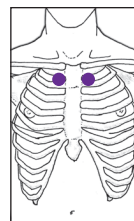
### Points Toward Health

Rubbing acupressure points with your finger for 30-60 seconds can stimulate these points and promote health and well-being.

#### Kidney 27 (KD 27)

##### Location:

Located off the breastbone, in the hollow below the collarbone. There may be a slight indentation.



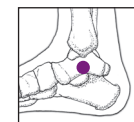
##### Function:

Strengthens the immune system, relieves allergies, alleviates drowsiness, chest congestion, breathing difficulties, asthma, coughing, hiccups, sore throats, anxiety, premenstrual tension, and depression. Also used to improve focus and performance.

#### Kidney 6 (KD6)

##### Location:

In the small indentation approximately 1 inch directly below the inside ankle bone.



##### Function:

Used for painful, swollen and sore throat, tightness in the throat, painful and red eyes, sleep disturbances, dizziness, irregular and painful menstruation, post-partum difficulties, genital problems, chest fullness, leg tightness, heavy limbs, ankle and foot pain.

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### Healthy Gift Ideas

Winter is not the healthiest season of the year. Sometimes people eat too much, drink too much and exercise too little. Experts tell us that the average person gains a pound every holiday season—and that pound is never lost.

But does it have to be this way?

This year make winter a healthy season and start by giving healthy gifts.

- **Massage.** No one disputes the health benefits of massage. From stress reduction to pain relief, massage supports your body and lifts your spirits. Gift certificates for massages using hot stones or essential oils are an especially nice treat. If a massage is too pricey, sign up for a deal-of-the-day website like Groupon and watch for specials. If you're really daring, buy some oils and give the massage yourself.
- **New Organic Sheets.** Fresh, soft sheets can be a real luxury that not only feels good but also helps you sleep well. Investigate bamboo sheets. The fiber is very soft and bamboo is easier on the environment than cotton.

### Infused Olive Oil

#### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons fresh chopped herbs, (such as thyme, rosemary, marjoram or chives)
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

#### Preparation

1. Combine herbs, salt and oil in a small bowl.

#### Tips & Notes

Gift Idea: Consider buying pretty bottles at a vintage store and filling them with your infused olive oil. These gifts taste good and look nice on your shelf.

#### Nutrition

Per tablespoon: 128 calories; 14 g fat ( 2 g sat , 11 g mono ); 0 mg cholesterol; 0 g carbohydrates; 0 g protein; 0 g fiber; 295 mg sodium; 12 mg potassium.

From: [http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/herbed\\_extra\\_virgin\\_olive\\_oil.html](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/herbed_extra_virgin_olive_oil.html)

- **Organic Skin Care.** Heated winter air can be very drying, even on young skin. Give your loved one a new scented lotion to enjoy. Be sure to read the label. Look for the fewest ingredients possible and check for ingredient names you recognize and can pronounce.
- **Tea Gift Basket.** Many teas soothe the nerves and provide valuable antioxidants. Create a basket of your favorite teas and decorate it with a ribbon. For an extra touch, include a small jar of locally harvested honey.
- **CSA Membership.** A Community Support Agriculture (CSA) farm offers "shares" or boxes of locally grown produce to its members every week. The boxes are a great way to eat local, organic food and to try vegetables that you've never had before. Each farm has a different membership plan, so call around to compare.
- **Essential Oil Collection.** Pure essential oils contain many health benefits including reducing stress, relieving pain and killing germs. Buy a pretty zipper bag and include Lavender, Lemon, and Peppermint for a personalized starter kit.
- **Fitness Toys.** Kettle Bells, balance balls, stretchy bands... People who work out love their workout toys. Give a simple collection of stretchy bands and your workout addict has options when he can't make it to the gym.
- **Spicy Nuts, Herbal Olive Oils.** Everyone loves homemade treats. Find simple recipes and beautiful jars or bottles. Fill the jars, tie them with a ribbon and you have an affordable, healthy gift for the foodie on your list. To make it even easier, use the recipes in this newsletter.
- **Workout Mix.** Look through your music collection and find your best workout music. Pick music with a strong beat and an uplifting message. Burn the music onto a disc or copy it to a thumb drive.

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### Vitamin D: The Sunlight Vitamin

Winter is dark. You go to work in the dark and come home in the dark. On December 21, the shortest day of the year, people in Miami can expect about 10 ½ hours daytime while people in Seattle will only have about 8 ½ hours.

Short days mean more than just coping with dark commutes. Without enough sunlight, your body can't produce Vitamin D.

Your body needs sunlight to produce Vitamin D. Vitamin D is important for absorption of calcium and regulating the immune system. It keeps your brain healthy, helps you maintain your weight and helps reduce your risk of cancer and heart attacks.

Low levels of Vitamin D are linked with many health risks. Vitamin D deficiency can cause Rickets, a condition of soft, weak bones, but it also plays a role in heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Studies have even linked it with an increased likelihood of catching a cold.

Scientists disagree about the extent of the problem. Different studies estimate from 10 – 75% of US teens and adults to have a Vitamin D deficiency. But everyone agrees that Vitamin D levels are dropping.

Certain groups have a higher incidence of Vitamin D deficiency. Blacks and Hispanics have the lowest levels of Vitamin D. People with no college education, obesity, poor health,

hypertension, low HDL cholesterol or who don't consume milk daily also show deficiencies.

But everyone should be concerned. Because more and more people use sunscreens, stay indoors, or wear long sleeves, scientists and doctors worry that Vitamin D deficiency will continue to grow.

#### How to Increase your Vitamin D

Sunlight is the best way to increase your Vitamin D however it's a tricky balance. Using just a SPF 15 sunscreen cuts the skin's Vitamin D production by 99 percent. But of course, soaking in the sun without sunscreen may increase your risk of skin cancer.

There are several dietary sources for Vitamin D. Fatty fishes like salmon, tuna, and mackerel contain healthy amounts. Some fortified foods like milk, orange juice or cereal contain high Vitamin D levels. Cod liver oil is also high.

Supplements are another option. Vitamin D3 is the best supplement form to take for those who have deficiencies. Vitamin D requires other fat-soluble vitamins such as Vitamin A and K and certain trace minerals in order to be properly utilized by the body. Use a holistic view when you choose your supplement. Consult with your acupuncturist if you are unsure which is best for you.

### Wash Up

Your Grandmother was right—wash your hands! Wash them before meals, after meals, and periodically through the day. It's not just old-fashioned hygiene; it's good medical sense.

Washing your hands is one of the best ways to prevent a cold. Doctors tell us that adults average 2 – 4 colds/year and children average 6 – 8 colds/year. Washing your hands reduces the bacteria and viruses on your hands, decreasing your exposure to the germs that cause colds. Even the FDA recommends that the best defense against colds is plain old hand washing.

When you wash your hands, lather up and wash your entire hand—front and back. Lather for a full 20 seconds, a very long time if you're not used to it. Try singing the Happy Birthday song twice to estimate the time.

Research shows that there is no increased benefit from using anti-bacterial soap. Use common hand soap but be sure to scrub the whole time. Most of the benefit of hand washing is simply rinsing the germs off your hands.

If you can't wash your hands with soap and water, then hand sanitizer is the next best thing. Not all hand sanitizers are equal. Look for alcohol based sanitizers and avoid anything with triclosan. For added natural benefits, look for hand sanitizers with essential oils.

### Curried Cashews

#### Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons lemon juice
- 6 tablespoons curry powder
- 4 teaspoons kosher salt
- 6 cups unsalted cashews

#### Preparation

1. Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 250°F.
2. Whisk lemon juice, curry powder and salt in a large bowl. Add cashews; toss to coat. Divide between 2 large rimmed baking sheets; spread in an even layer.
3. Bake, stirring every 15 minutes, until dry, about 45 minutes. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

#### Tips & Notes

Make Ahead Tip: Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks. This recipe works great for a holiday gift. Make several batches, put them in pretty containers, and you have a delicious treat for your loved ones.

For more healthy spiced nut recipes, visit: [www.eatingwell.com/recipes\\_menus/recipe\\_slideshows/healthy\\_spiced\\_nuts\\_recipes](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes_menus/recipe_slideshows/healthy_spiced_nuts_recipes)

#### Nutrition

Per 2-tablespoon serving: 101 calories; 8 g fat ( 2 g sat , 5 g mono ); 0 mg cholesterol; 6 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 3 g protein; 1 g fiber; 96 mg sodium; 111 mg potassium.

From: [www.eatingwell.com/recipes/curried\\_cashews.html](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/curried_cashews.html)

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