

THE BIG IDEAS

Are You Sleep-Deprived?

Here're some hints.

Sleep Thieves

The Top 6.

Optimal Sleep

For optimal living. 4 keys.

Suprachiasmatic Nucleus

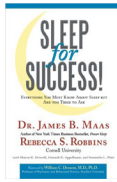
How's yours?

Where Will I Find Time?

Say YES! And "No."

Pre-Sleep Routines

How's your buffer?



Sleep for Success!

Everything You Must Know About Sleep But Are Too Tired to Ask

BY DR. JAMES B. MAAS & REBECCA ROBBINS · AUTHORHOUSE · © 2011 · 264 PAGES

“Unfortunately, most of us don’t value sleep because we’re blissfully ignorant of what can happen when we don’t get enough of it. Many people regard sleep as a luxury, a waste of time, and even a weakness of character. How often have you heard the macho expression, ‘What do you mean you need eight hours of sleep, you sloth? Look at me, all I need is six!’

It’s time we put an end to these myths and misplaced values. New research shows *we must stop resisting rest*. We now know that quality sleep is an absolute necessity, and the sad and alarming truth is that the majority of the world’s population doesn’t get enough of it. ...

There are ways to get great sleep, even if you’ve been experiencing insomnia or have one or more of the other eighty-nine known sleep disorders. Do you want to be healthier, more energetic, creative, organized, efficient, and constantly expanding your potential? Do you want to be less stressed, happier, have a better relationship with yourself and others, and have a deeper sense of well-being? What if you could take a few small steps every day that would enable you to sleep better and eventually achieve all these things?

You can. In fact, it’s easy.

The solutions are at hand. You’re holding them. Read on and enjoy *Sleep for Success!*”

~ Dr. James B. Maas and Rebecca Robbins from *Sleep for Success!*

“It’s time we learned to value sleep not as a luxury but as a necessity.”

~ Dr. James B. Maas

Did you know that 65% of us will have trouble falling asleep tonight and be tired tomorrow?

And sleep deprivation costs the United States \$66 BILLION annually.

That’s a lot of people. And a lot of money.

So, if you fall into that group, know that you’re *definitely* not alone. And, know that there are some very straight-forward things you can do to optimize.

[Dr. James B. Maas](#) is one of the world’s leading researchers and educators in the sleep world. He’s been at this for nearly FIVE decades and has taught more than 65,000 students and thousands of executives about the importance of sleep.

We covered his earlier *New York Times* best-selling book [Power Sleep](#) (see Notes). In this book, he teams up with his former student Rebecca Robbins to deliver some sleep wisdom in a fun, down to earth and practical guide. (Get the book [here](#).)

I read it as part of my prep for [Optimal Sleep 101](#). Check out that class + growing collection of [Notes on sleep](#). I’m excited to share some of my favorite Ideas we can apply TONIGHT so let’s jump straight in! :)

"What we consider the negative aspects of adolescence-rebellion, violence, drug abuse, dropping out-are caused by or exaggerated by sleep deprivation."

~ William Dement, MD

WHAT'S IT MEAN TO BE SLEEP-DEPRIVED?

"You are sleep-deprived if you're not meeting your personal sleep need, which for most adults is between 7.5 and 9 hours per night. You should feel energetic, wide awake, and alert all day, without a significant midday drop in alertness. And the term 'sleep-deprived' certainly applies to anyone who has difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, wakes up too early, and/or has poor sleep quality.

Most Americans are at least modestly sleep-deprived. While the average person claims to get 7.1 hours of sleep per night, a study at the University of Chicago demonstrated that it's actually much less. Researchers attached small sleep-monitoring devices to subjects and found that those claiming 7 to 8 hours per night really slept closer to 6. It seems we're so sleep deprived, we aren't even aware of how little we rest. And you can imagine what this means for the 55 percent of Americans who *think* they're getting 6 to 7 hours of sleep."

Although I tend to get closer to 8+ hours (at least I *think* I do! hah), I can't say that I don't feel a drop in alertness mid- late day. Am I sleep-deprived?! Hmmmm... :)

How about *you*?!

How many hours of sleep are you getting these days?

Can you get up without an alarm clock feeling rested?

And, do you see the value of getting more sleep?

Let's take a look at what gets in the way then what we can do about it...

THE SIX BIGGEST SLEEP THIEVES

"What are the most common causes of sleep deprivation?"

The biggest and most prevalent cause is our society's persistent belief that sleep is a luxury rather than a necessity. When it seems there just aren't enough hours in the day, sleep is the first thing we cut, though ironically if we slept more, we'd be more efficient and productive."

Dr. Maas comes back to this again and again: Sleep is a NECESSITY not a luxury.

In [Sleep Smarter](#) (see Notes), [Shawn Stevenson](#) shared 21 tips for dialing in our sleep. Tip #1: Know the value of sleep. It all starts with properly accounting for just how important sleep is.

Sleep deprivation affects EVERYTHING.

What's your attitude toward sleep? Do you value it?

Check in on that because it's going to dictate how seriously you approach optimizing it.

With the #0 sleep stealer in mind, here are the "Six Biggest Sleep Thieves

- Alcohol or caffeine after 2 pm
- Tobacco
- Strenuous exercise within three hours of bedtime
- A heavy meal within three hours of bedtime
- A poor bedroom environment
- Stress"

There ya go. The 6 biggest sleep thieves.

How're you doing with each? Let's do a super-quick inventory:

"If you have time to run to Starbucks for a latte, you have time to nap. Just as with anything else, it's a matter of prioritizing."

~ Dr. James B. Maas

- **Are you avoiding caffeine after 2 pm? Yes/No.**

Remember: Caffeine basically masks your fatigue by blocking the normal communication channels your body uses to let you know you need to shut down. Handy at times but not good for optimal rest. And, remember: caffeine has a half-life of 5-8 hours—which means 5-8 hours AFTER you had your caffeine you STILL have 1/2 the amount of the original caffeine in your body—keeping you buzzing rather than sleeping.

- **Have you kicked the tobacco habit? Yes/No.**

If not, what're you waiting for? Check out [Habits 101](#) for more Ideas on how to kick this to the curb.

- **Are you working out hard within 3 hours of your optimal bed time? Yes/No**

You're raising your core temperature too close to your bed time—when it should be dropping. Work out earlier and get the benefits of both a better night's sleep and a mood boost!

- **Are you eating within 3 hours of your optimal bed time? Yes/No**

If so, quit doing that! Your body works super hard to digest your food. Don't make it do that work when it should be shutting down to recover/repair overnight via great sleep!

- **You have a great bedroom environment? Yes/No**

Short story here: Your bedroom should be a sanctuary: cool (60° to 68° Fahrenheit), quiet, dark and mellow (aka, don't bring your smartphones and TVs into your room). Is yours?

- **You super stressed? Yes/No**

This will obviously keep you wired and is the #1 reason people report having trouble sleeping. It's why I'm constantly talking about being able to control our attention—putting our minds where we want, when we want. We need to tame those monkeys. Remember that meditating in the AM helps you sleep better in the PM. We talk about creating an "Off Switch" in Sleep 101.

OPTIMAL SLEEP FOR OPTIMAL LIVING

"Perhaps the best thing you can do for your youngster is to become a good role model as far as sleep. If you value sleep, your child will pick up on that too."

~ Dr. James B. Maas

"We know most of you don't value sleep. You consider it a luxury rather than a necessity and, as a result, you aren't willing to adjust your schedule to get adequate rest. But give us one week. That's all we ask. Follow our four simple keys for seven days, and you'll experience—perhaps for the first time since you were a child—what it feels like to be fully awake. More sleep means better daytime performance, a more upbeat mood, greater health, and an enhanced sense of well-being. Although a week's vacation can deliver that too, its effects won't last as long and it'll cost you lots more."

Dr. Maas tells us that there are **Four Essential Keys to Sleeping Well**.

Here they are:

1. **ESSENTIAL KEY #1: Determine your Personal Sleep Quotient (or PSQ) and meet it nightly.**

Your PSQ is essentially how much sleep YOU need on a given night. Remember the range is likely to be between 7.5 hours and 9 hours. He has a little method to discover it which is basically to go to bed at a time that will give you 8 hours of sleep. If you can't wake up without an alarm feeling refreshed, give yourself 15 more minutes of sleep until you can.

2. **ESSENTIAL KEY #2: Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up naturally at the same time every morning, including weekends.**

Big Idea here: BE CONSISTENT. 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Don't sleep in on weekends. That basically gives you jet lag and leads to really cranky Monday mornings. Of course, you don't need to be *perfectly* consistent—going to bed at exactly the same time

every night—but you do want to be pretty close. This is an Idea Maas stressed a LOT in [Power Sleep](#) as well. Are you consistent or are you all over the place? *“Regularity is vital for setting and stabilizing your body’s biological clock.”*

3. ESSENTIAL KEY #3: Get your required amount of sleep in one continuous block.

Of course, it’s not always possible to get one long chunk of sleep, but that’s the target. *“Six hours of continuous sleep are often more restorative than eight hours of fragmented sleep.”*

4. ESSENTIAL KEY #4: Make up for lost sleep as soon as possible.

We’re building up a sleep debt with every hour we’re awake. Basically, for every 2 hours we’re up, we owe 1 hour of sleep. If we build up too much debt, we will crash. So, if you skimp one night, try to make it up the next night—but do it by going to bed earlier rather than sleeping in later! (And, naps can be helpful but do them earlier so you don’t disrupt your sleep that night.)

HOW’S YOUR SUPRACHIASMATIC NUCLEUS TODAY?

“Increasing your sleep by one hour is the best diet. You can lose as much as a pound a week just by sleeping a little longer.”

~ Dr. James B. Maas

“This ‘biological clock’ inside you isn’t just a metaphor. Even though you can’t hear it ticking, it exists. It’s scientific name is the ‘suprachiasmatic nucleus,’ or SCN, and it’s located in a small but complex region of the brain known as the hypothalamus.

Studies show that this schedule is clearly dictated by light. This body clock adjusts to light by a process called ‘entrainment,’ meaning it’s slowly pulled into synchronization by its presence, kind of like the moon influences the world’s oceans. Anything that promotes entrainment is called a *zeitgeber*, literally a ‘time-giver’ in German. Light is the most important *zeitgeber* to circadian rhythm. Therefore, shift workers are at a tremendous disadvantage when it comes to getting a good night’s sleep because their internal clock is at odds with its environment.”

The suprachiasmatic nucleus.

That’s the name of the little biological clock within your hypothalamus that regulates your most fundamental biological schedules throughout the day.

It’s the time-keeper for our daily circadian rhythms and has been highly tuned over the last x millions of years.

Very important point: The schedule is *“clearly dictated by light.”*

This wisdom is from a chapter on “Surviving Shift-Work” focused on helping people who work late at night in which Maas talks about the very significant health challenges these people face.

But the fact is nearly ALL of us are completely messing with this highly-tuned clock EVERY. SINGLE.DAY. by blasting ourselves with a crazy amount of artificial light via our TVs, computer screen, iPads, and smartphones.

Remember: It was only in 1880 that Edison’s light bulb hit the market. That’s only 135 years ago—a BLINK of the eye in the big picture.

It was only a handful of decades ago that TVs started showing up. And only a DECADE ago that smartphones became so ubiquitous.

This is why turning off your electronics as you approach bed time is the #1 tip to optimizing. Well, right after seeing the importance of prioritizing a good night’s sleep. :)

Are you blowing up your suprachiasmatic nucleus with artificial light? Stop doing that.

(And, DO start exposing yourself to AM light as that helps re-set things!)

"Most adults require between seven and a half and nine hours of sleep to be fully awake and energized all day long. As a rule of thumb, you'll probably have to add one more hour to your current sleep schedule."

~ Dr. James B. Maas

WHERE WILL I FIND THE TIME?

"Doc, I know sleep is important, but how can I get enough when I have PTA meetings, little league games, friendships to maintain, and a triathlon to train for?"

Do these concerns sound familiar? Our 24/7 world makes it harder than ever to value sleep. Make a list of your goals. Do you want to be a good father to your children? Do you want to blow last year's sales numbers out of the water and get a raise this year? Do you want to keep improving your running time for a 5k? Then ask yourself what the main things are that consume your time. Do you spend an hour after dinner watching television? Are you spending too long commuting to work because you can't seem to get out the door before rush hour? Are you shopping online or using social networking websites? These thieves take up more of your time than you think. Focus on your goals. Cut everything else out. Make sleep a priority, and you'll likely find that you are a more attentive father, higher performer in the workplace, and better athlete."

We're all busy. I get that. And... One of the important points Maas makes throughout the book is that we don't need to go nuts and completely rearrange our lives to optimize our sleep.

Most of us just need to get ONE more hour of good sleep. ONE!

All we need to do to get that hour back is find the places where we're currently wasting it. But it starts with knowing what you REALLY want. I love the simplicity here: *"Focus on your goals. Cut everything else out."*

So: What are your WILDLY important "YES!!!" goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

And, where are you wasting some time you can recapture and put into higher priorities like sleep? <— *"These thieves take up more of your time than you think."*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Say "YES!" to your REALLY important goals. Identify the things that aren't a priority and eliminate them.

(And, repeat with 4% optimizations per day forever. :)

P.S. My quick inventory:

My WILDLY important "YES!!!" goals:

1. Optimizing + actualizing.
2. Being a great husband + father.
3. Creating a great biz through which I help people OPTIMIZE

My current time thieves:

1. Going online before totally crushing it. (Standard: Go online after AM1 + AM2 + PM!)
2. Going online before totally crushing it. (Standard: Go online after AM1 + AM2 + PM!)
3. Going online before totally crushing it. (Standard: Go online after AM1 + AM2 + PM!)

"It's simple: sleep better and sleep more. Most people need to rest just one extra hour per night to stay completely alert all day."

~ Dr. James B. Maas

PRE-SLEEP ROUTINES: HOW'S YOUR BUFFER?

"A pre-sleep routine is key to a good night's sleep."

In order to sleep soundly through the night, your body needs to prepare itself for the long period of inactivity ahead. It needs a buffer between the day's stress and the night's rest. You need to find peace and calm in the hour before bed. Slipping between the sheets and closing your eyes should be the very last part of that ritual."

We wrapped up our Note on [Sleep Smarter](#) with the same basic idea: We need a PM ritual. (Remember: *ritual* comes from the Latin *ritus* which means "a proven way of doing things.")

What's your proven way of getting a good night of sleep?

If you're following the good Dr.'s advice, you avoided the 6 sleep thieves by eating dinner + exercising more than three hours before bedtime, not having caffeine after 2 pm, (completely eliminated nicotine!), got your bedroom all dialed in and managed your stress.

Now, for the final encore: Our pre-sleep routine that provides a nice little BUFFER between the day's activity and your great night of sleep.

Notes: A hot (100°) shower or bath is a good idea (especially when you leave the shower to a cool (< 68°) room—helping your body's core temp drop). Watching TV before bed is a BAD idea. Not only are you messing with your melatonin via the bright, unnatural light, you're blowing your brain up with stimulation.)

Here's to a solid pre-sleep routine and a great night of sleep!!

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

If you liked this Note,
you'll probably like...

[Power Sleep](#)

[Sleep Smarter](#)

[The Power of Rest](#)

[Take a Nap Change Your Life](#)

About the Author of "Sleep for Success"

DR. JAMES B. MAAS



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Dr. Robbins is the author of *Sleep for Success!*, a lay person's guide to getting a good night's sleep. Dr. Robbins conducts research on the relationship between sleep and performance. Her consulting and speaking clients include Google, the Nightingale School for Girls, and the Benjamin Hotel in New York City. Connect: sleephealthsolutions.com.

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.