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The Many Health Benefits of Sleeping Naked

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By Dr. Mercola

Can sleeping naked improve your sleep and health? Evidence suggests that, yes, ditching your sleepwear may in fact have a number of benefits, including better sleep. Interestingly enough, a mere 8 percent of Americans admit to sleeping naked.²

Many of these health benefits result from the fact that sleeping naked helps prevent overheating, which can have a significant impact on your sleep quality. As you fall asleep, your body temperature drops, and this drop in core temperature actually helps you sleep better.

As you wake, your body temperature rises, which is why it's much more difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep when you're hot.

Many keep their homes too warm to begin with, and wearing pajamas to bed will make you even warmer, which can lead to restless sleep and frequent waking. Ideally, keep the temperature in your bedroom below 70 degrees F. Studies show that the [optimal room temperature for sleep](#) is between 60 to 68 degrees.

One study showed a surface skin temperature difference of as little as 0.08 degrees F (or 0.4 degrees C) allowed subjects to sleep more soundly. But the benefits of sleeping in the buff don't end there.

Surprising Health Benefits of Sleeping Naked

Other health benefits of sleeping naked include:^{2,3,4,5}

Improved metabolism

Lowering your body temperature helps activate

Story at-a-glance

Evidence suggests sleeping naked can have a number of benefits, including better sleep. Many of these benefits are related to lower body temperature, which can have a significant impact on your sleep quality

Besides improving your sleep quality, sleeping in the nude can help boost metabolism, improve blood circulation, sperm quality, skin and genital health, balance hormones and improve your sex life

Quality sleep is important for brain detoxification and cognitive health. Tips to improve your sleep include maintaining a regular morning/evening routine, avoiding stimulants, removing electronics from your bedroom and more

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brown fat — a type of body fat that helps regulate your body temperature by generating heat.

Research shows that people with higher levels of brown fat have faster resting metabolic rates, better blood sugar control and higher insulin sensitivity. In one study, sleeping in a chilled room doubled the amount of brown fat participants produced.⁶

Improved blood circulation

Without clothing your blood flow is less restricted, which benefits your entire body, especially your heart and muscles.

Healthier skin and private parts

Bacteria thrive in warm, moist areas, so ditching clothing, including underwear, can be particularly beneficial for women prone to yeast infections. Other areas, including your armpits (and skin in general) also benefit from being able to breathe.

Improved sperm quality

Men can also benefit from sleeping "commando." A man's testicles are designed to keep sperm at a temperature just slightly below core body temperature. Underwear that bunch the testicles close to the body may therefore reduce sperm quality and affect a man's fertility.

Improved sex life

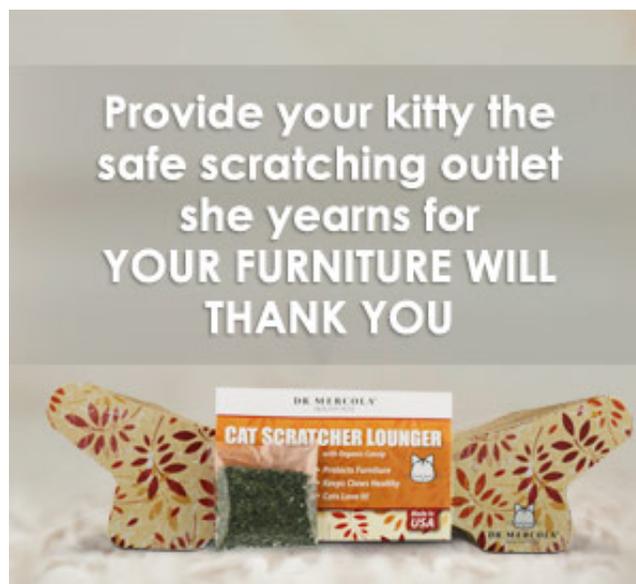
Skin-to-skin contact (as well as orgasm) releases the "bonding" hormone oxytocin, which promotes feelings of attachment and emotional closeness. Since sexual contact typically occurs while naked, sleeping in the nude raises the chances of sex, which can bring a couple closer.

Balancing hormones

By allowing your body to stay cooler at night, sleeping naked helps decrease cortisol, increase growth hormone and balance melatonin, all of which help promote healthy sleep patterns and reduce anxiety, stress and food cravings.

Night Shift

Natural Secrets to Help You Get a Sound Night's Sleep



Improving Your Sleep Helps Improve Brain Health

Besides information on sleeping in the nude, the Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH) recently issued a number of daytime, evening and nighttime recommendations that can help you get more quality sleep, which is important for brain detoxification (which only occurs during deep sleep) and cognitive health. These tips include:^{7,8}

Keep a regular morning and evening routine

Get up at the same time every day, seven days a week, and keep a regular bedtime routine. When you establish a consistent, soothing bedtime routine, you're more likely to fall asleep easily. Activities such as a warm bath, reading a good book or relaxation exercises can be helpful.

Keeping a regular exercise schedule will also help optimize your sleep cycle. Seek to get to bed before 10 p.m. if possible to optimize your chronobiological cycles.

Avoid stimulants

Restrict fluids and food for at least three hours before bedtime. Avoiding dinner at least three hours before bed will also promote mitochondrial health, as explained in my previous article, "[Two Meals a Day Is Ideal](#)."

Avoid alcohol and nicotine four to six hours before going to bed, and if you're sensitive to caffeine, avoid drinking coffee and caffeine-containing drinks after lunch. (Extremely sensitive people may even need to abstain from chocolate in the afternoon/evening.)

Remove electronics from your bedroom

This includes TVs, telephones, computers and tablets, as the blue light emitted from electronic screens suppress melatonin production, making sleep elusive.

Limit daytime naps to less than 30 minutes

Avoid evening stress

In the evening, avoid getting into heated arguments and limit "worry time" to 15 minutes in the morning instead of ruminating all night. Also put all your work away at least an hour or two before bed. You need a chance to unwind before falling asleep without being anxious about the next day's plans or deadlines.

Make your bedroom a pet-free zone

While many enjoy having pets sleep with them, allowing pets in your bed can disrupt your sleep.

Optimize your light exposure, day and night

In the morning and early afternoon, expose yourself to bright daylight to anchor and synchronize your circadian clock and melatonin production. Bright light exposure during the day is particularly important if you have trouble falling asleep at night or suffer from insomnia.

In general it is best to avoid blue light sources, such as [LEDs](#) and electronics, as blue light suppresses melatonin production. This is especially important after sunset.

These light sources become less troublesome if you use a good filter on your computer screen. My favorite is [Iris](#), which was developed by a Bulgarian programmer named Daniel Georgiev.

He recently gave a TEDx talk that describes this very inexpensive program. He's also developed a version for iPads.

How technology is killing our eyes | Daniel Georgiev | TE...



Swap out the light bulbs you use most regularly and replace them with clear incandescent light bulbs. Candles are an even healthier light source, as our ancestors have been using them for many thousands of years.

Another solution I've found that I think works even better is to simply wear amber-colored glasses that block blue light in the evening. I found an Uvex model ([S1933X](#)) on Amazon that costs less than \$9.

Once you have your glasses on, it doesn't matter what light sources you have on in your house. The moment sunset comes, I put on these glasses and I have noticed dramatic improvement since doing this.

My vision has radically improved and at 62 years of age, I don't require reading glasses.

Keep bedroom dark, cool and quiet

In addition to lowering the thermostat, make your bedroom as dark and quiet as possible. Research shows even very dim light exposure during sleep can have adverse effects on your brain function. Ideally, install blackout curtains, or use an eye mask.

Sleep Is Essential for Optimal Health

Sleep affects your health in a myriad of ways. The GCBH naturally places a significant focus on the brain, but sleep is important for your entire body. As for how much sleep you need, research shows most adults need right around eight hours of sleep each night for optimal health and disease prevention. Children and teens need more. Lack of sleep, or poor-quality sleep, has been linked to:

Increased risk of car accidents	Increased accidents at work	Reduced ability to perform tasks
Reduced ability to learn or remember	Reduced productivity at work	Reduced creativity at work or in other activities
Reduced athletic performance	Increased risk of <u>type 2 diabetes</u> , obesity, cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and <u>cardiovascular disease</u>	Increased risk of <u>depression</u>

Increased risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease	Decreased immune function	Slowed reaction time
Reduced regulation of emotions and emotional perception	Poor grades in school	Increased susceptibility to stomach ulcers
Exacerbation of chronic diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and cancer	Increased expression of genes associated with inflammation, immune excitability, diabetes, cancer risk and stress ⁹	Premature aging by interfering with growth hormone production, normally released by your pituitary gland during deep sleep

Why Sleeping Pills Are Best Avoided

The GCBH also warns against the use of sleeping pills, noting the potential for side effects, especially for older individuals. Studies have also shown they do little to actually help you sleep more or improve the quality of your sleep. Belsomra, for example, has been shown to help you fall asleep only six minutes sooner than a placebo (on average) and stay asleep just 16 minutes longer — and that was in the company's own clinical trials.¹⁰

Meanwhile, nearly 1,000 consumer complaints against Belsomra were filed with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) between February and July 2015 alone. Many complained the drug didn't work. Sleep paralysis, next-day drowsiness and even suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts were reported.

An analysis of studies financed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that sleeping pills like Ambien, Lunesta and Sonata reduced the average time it takes to fall asleep by about 13 minutes compared to placebo, while increasing total sleep time by about 11 minutes.

Interestingly, participants believed they had slept longer, by up to one hour. This is thought to be due to anterograde amnesia, which causes trouble with forming memories. When people wake up after taking sleeping pills, they may simply forget they'd been unable to sleep.

A startling study¹¹ published in 2012 also revealed that people who take sleeping pills have a 35 percent higher risk for certain cancers, and are nearly 400 percent more likely to die than people who don't take them. Remarkably, this association held true even if the patients took fewer than 18 sleeping pills a year, equating to taking just one sleeping pill every three weeks. Other health risks associated with sleeping pills include:

An increased risk for insulin resistance, food cravings, weight gain and diabetes
Amnesia, even of events that occurred during the day
Depression, confusion, disorientation and/or hallucinations
Increased risk of accidents. Studies submitted to the FDA reveal blood levels of zolpidem (found in Ambien and other sleeping pills) above 50 ng/mL may impair your driving, especially among women. ¹²
Sleep aids that contain Benadryl can have a half-life of about 18 hours, so if you take them every night, you're basically sedated for a large portion of the day as well, resulting in cognitive deficits and accident proneness
Increased risk for dementia in seniors

Parasomnias¹³ — bizarre behavioral reactions, including sleepwalking and engaging in potentially embarrassing or dangerous tasks while fast asleep, such as driving, having sex, eating (including bizarre things like buttered cigarettes, salt sandwiches or raw bacon), texting or tweeting^{14,15}

For Optimal Health, Prioritize Sleep

Increasing the number of hours you sleep to eight each night and improving the quality of your sleep may significantly improve your overall health, and help reduce your risk for any number of physical and psychological problems. Remember that in order to optimize your sleep, you have to go to bed early enough. If you have to be up by 6:30 a.m., going to bed after midnight is a recipe for sleep deprivation.

Many fitness trackers can now track both daytime body movement and sleep, allowing you to get a better picture of how much sleep you're actually getting.

Certain ones can even tell you which activities led to your best sleep and what factors resulted in poor sleep. If you struggle with sleep issues, it may be a worthwhile investment. For even more tips to help you clean up your sleep hygiene and improve your sleep, see my previous article, "[Want a Good Night's Sleep? Then Never Do These Things Before Bed.](#)"

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