



# NOVEMBER 2015 ZEITGEBER

To keep the spirit of Oktoberfest alive, I would like to introduce you to another German concept—the zeitgeber. Meaning “time giver,” a zeitgeber is any cue that synchronizes our daily biorhythms with the Earth’s 24-hour light/dark cycle. Some common environmental zeitgebers are light and temperature. This month when we set our clocks back by one hour, we adjusted the Earth’s 24-hour light/dark cycle. The earlier sunrise and nightfall coupled with the cooler fall temperatures act as zeitgebers that gently nudge us to sleep more.

This is good news in the face of a nation plagued by poor sleep. According to the National Sleep Foundation, over 60% of Americans suffer from poor sleep quality or insomnia. Whether occasional, recurrent, or perpetual, insomnia is correlated with health concerns and reduced productivity.

## HEALTH CONCERNS

- Compromised Immunity
- High Blood Pressure
- Eating Disorders
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Obesity
- Diabetes



## REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY

- Increased Presenteeism
- Increased Absenteeism
- Lack of Focus
- Slower Thinking
- Poor Memory and Judgement
- Poor Attitude
- Irritability
- Mistakes and Accidents
- Interpersonal Difficulties



Despite these correlations, corporate cultures continue to foster environments where “pushing through” is revered. Ariana Huffington, an unwitting victim of time machismo and once estranged from her relationship with sleep, now considers herself a “sleep evangelist”. Her startling wake-up call, she reports, occurred in a pool of her own blood. After a particularly trying week of touring colleges by day and working by night, she keeled over from exhaustion and broke her cheekbone on her way down. As a stitched-up newly-minted sleep crusader, she now chides colleagues for e-mails time-stamped in the wee hours and gives out old fashioned alarm clocks as gifts. Today *The Huffington Post* offices feature nap rooms for those needing even more sleep.



the supplement  
FACILITATING VITALITY

While most of us don't have the luxury of a snooze during the workday, we certainly could invest some time and effort into better sleep hygiene. "Sleep hygiene" is used by sleep researchers to describe the sleep environment and sleep-associated behaviors. Elements include room lighting and temperature, sleep surface and pillows, noise, television, computers, eating, snoring, pets and anything else that can enhance or disrupt the quantity and quality of one's sleep.

## SLEEP ENHANCERS

- Keep to a sleep schedule both during the week and on the weekends.
- Make sure your sleep environment is dark - I turn my alarm clock face down.
- Get some exercise at least three hours prior to sleep.
- Set a cooler temperature at night (63°F to 68°F is ideal).
- Learn to meditate.
- Avoid eating before bed.
- Use a white noise machine to eliminate things that go bump in the night.
- Have a bedtime routine such as taking a bath or reading fiction.



## SLEEP DISRUPTORS

- Turn off the television before falling asleep, or at least set the timer.
- Turn off the computer, cellphone, or tablet two hours before bedtime.
- Eliminate clutter.
- Give pets their own sleeping space.
- Write down your worrisome thoughts before sleep or if they wake you.
- Cut down on caffeine— it can take up to 10 hours to metabolize.
- Avoid alcohol — it has a rebound effect and will wake you in the middle of the night.

To test your Sleep IQ, take the National Sleep Foundation's quiz at the link below.

<https://sleepfoundation.org/quiz/sleep-iq-quiz>

### RESOURCES



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 17 years to designing and delivering wellness programs as a project manager and contractor for PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP. Her training events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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