

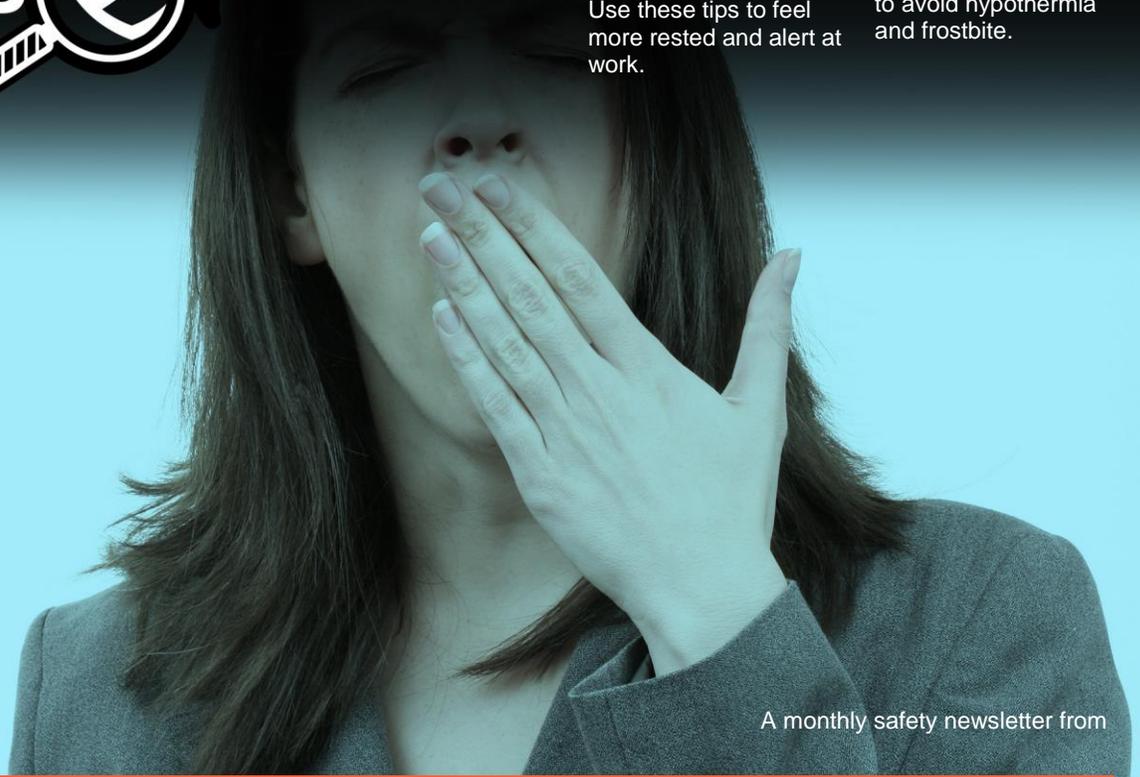


5 Tips for Avoiding Sleep Deprivation

Use these tips to feel more rested and alert at work.

Dress Warmly in the Cold

Keep yourself insulated to avoid hypothermia and frostbite.



A monthly safety newsletter from

5 Tips for Avoiding Sleep Deprivation

In today's fast-paced world, you may try to squeeze extra productivity out of your day by sleeping less. However, according to the Division of Sleep Medicine at the Harvard Medical School, any short-term benefits you gain from skipping sleep become meaningless once sleep deprivation begins to affect your mood, ability to focus and access to higher-level brain functions.

Sleep deprivation has a number of dangerous health effects and can lead to substantial injuries or death. These can include difficulty focusing, lapses in memory, increased stress and weight gain. Sleep deprivation has also been shown to increase the probability of heart attacks, strokes and type 2 diabetes.

Your body runs on a 24-hour cycle, called a circadian rhythm, which lets you know when it is time for sleep or time to wake up. Though getting your body on a natural, healthy sleep cycle may feel impossible, there are strategies you can use to ensure that you always get enough rest:

1. Don't use artificial sedatives to fall asleep. Though they may seem like they are helping, sedatives disrupt the brain's natural sleep process.

2. Avoid "blue" light at night. When your brain detects the blue light given off by TVs, computers and other screen-based devices, it stops the release of melatonin, a hormone that makes you feel tired.
3. Only drink caffeine early in the day. Caffeine can stay in your system for up to 24 hours, and, as a result, it can create a cycle of fatigue if you rely on it to feel alert.
4. Maintain consistent sleep habits. If you go to sleep and wake up at regular times, your body's circadian rhythm will naturally help you maintain this schedule.
5. Know how much sleep you need. Many people underestimate the amount of sleep they need. The National Sleep Foundation estimates that the average person needs a little over seven hours of sleep every night to function optimally, but this can vary from person to person.

Talk to your doctor if you still feel sleep-deprived, as he or she can evaluate your symptoms or refer you to a board-certified sleep specialist.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one-third of workers in the United States get less than six hours of sleep each night.



BALDWIN
KRISTYN SHERMAN

Dress Warmly in the Cold

Anyone in a cold environment can be exposed to cold stress and its associated health effects. Even in temperatures above freezing, most of the body's energy is used to keep your core temperature warm. This can lead to serious and sometimes fatal medical conditions if you don't take steps to insulate your body by dressing appropriately.

The most common cold-related conditions are hypothermia and frostbite. If any part of your body is exposed to cold conditions, it can lead to tissue damage, blood vessel damage, the loss of an extremity or death. However, the extremities of your body—those furthest from your body's core—are at increased risk. You can decrease the risk of cold stress by wearing the right amount and type of materials.

Not all materials have the same insulation properties, so wearing the right clothes and an adequate number of layers is vital:

- Wear clothing with wool or synthetic materials whenever possible. Cotton loses a large portion of its insulation when wet.

- Wear at least three layers of loose-fitting clothing to provide better insulation. The middle layer should provide insulation even when wet, and the outermost layer should protect against any wind or rain.
- Use a hat or earmuffs to prevent heat from escaping through your ears. If needed, use a mask to cover your face and mouth as well.
- Keep an extra set of clothes nearby in case you get wet and need to change.
- Wear insulated, waterproof gloves to keep your hands warm.

Working in extremely cold conditions is dangerous, so always try to work when it's warmest. If you believe you are exhibiting symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite, such as numbness, shivering, impaired judgement or discolored skin, go to a warm, dry area and get medical attention as soon as possible.



Safety in NUMBERS 123

Self-reported Sleep-related Difficulties Among Adults

Taking Care of Financial Affairs:



10.5%

Driving or Taking Public Transportation:



11.3%

Working on Hobbies:



13.3%

Remembering Things:



18.2%

Concentrating on Things:



23.2%

Performing Employed or Volunteer Work:



8.6%

Source: CDC

Real-life Case Study

Liam, a middle school teacher, noticed that he had trouble concentrating recently and tried to change his daily schedule so that he could wake up earlier. He thought that having extra time to prepare for his classes each morning would help him focus.

Having heard that reading can help prepare the body for sleep, Liam began to read in bed using an e-reader. He also took a mild sedative when he didn't feel tired at night.

After a few weeks of this new routine, Liam felt even worse than he had before. Not only did he have trouble concentrating, but he now felt irritable and sometimes dozed off between classes. When these problems persisted, Liam went to his doctor for help.

Liam's doctor told him that the blue light emitted by his e-reader suppressed his body's release of melatonin, and that the use of sedatives also disrupted his body's natural sleep cycle. Additionally, Liam's original problem with concentration was probably the result of not getting enough sleep in the first place.

Now, Liam reads a printed book each night and is sure to get at least seven hours of sleep. As a result, he feels well-rested in the morning and is more productive throughout the day.