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Invest in Rest: Four Adjustments for Better Quality Sleep

discussing difficult topics

Getting enough sleep every night is a challenge for many adults. While the number of hours of sleep each person needs changes throughout life, doctors recommend adults aged 18-64 receive seven or more hours of sleep per night regularly. However, life's everyday events and worries can make it challenging to consistently bank enough sleep to tackle the next day.

Dr. Michael Breus, PhD, Diplomate of the American Board of Sleep Medicine and a Fellow of The American Academy of Sleep Medicine, is recognized as a sleep doctor. He shared his experience working with sleep-struggling patients for nearly 25 years to offer relatively easy recommendations on improving nightly rest.

01

Make gradual adjustments and listen to the body

The amount of sleep each individual needs can vary based on their own body's functionality. For instance, women may require more sleep before and during their menstrual cycles due to hormone fluctuations and the loss of essential vitamins and minerals such as iron, vitamin B, vitamin D, and magnesium. Insufficient sleep during menstruation can lead to heavier bleeding and more painful cramps. Therefore, it is recommended that women listen to their bodies and get additional rest if they are feeling low energy during this time.

In contrast, just like sleep deprivation, getting too much sleep can damage your health. According to the Sleep Foundation¹, oversleeping (sleeping more than nine hours), can have adverse effects that impact your immune system, mental health, and heart health, and may contribute to chronic diseases. Oversleeping can also lead to daytime sleepiness and headaches, he said.



02 Address nasal congestion

Many people suffer from allergies and nasal problems that worsen when they lie down in bed. Nasal congestion often leads to snoring and breathing problems, which impact the ability to stay asleep. To manage nightly nasal problems, consider the following:

- Elevate your head with extra pillows
- Wear nose adhesive strips
- Try using a decongestant
- Use a humidifier
- Consider nasal irrigation

03 Consider taking vitamins

Many people who struggle with falling asleep and staying asleep often turn to sleeping aids to help with restlessness. However, it's possible to address fatigue without sleeping aids by increasing vitamin intake throughout the day, according to Dr. Breus. Vitamins play a crucial role in regulating hormones, immune system function, healing, and sleep.

Unfortunately, many people don't get all the vitamins needed from their daily diet. Dr. Breus affirms, "If you are deficient in vitamin D, magnesium, and iron, you can absolutely end up with insomnia."

Supplementing with melatonin, magnesium, vitamin B, and vitamin D can help reduce stress and regulate sleep. It is important, though, to consult your doctor before adding new supplements due to sleep issues, he said.

04

Take a breather

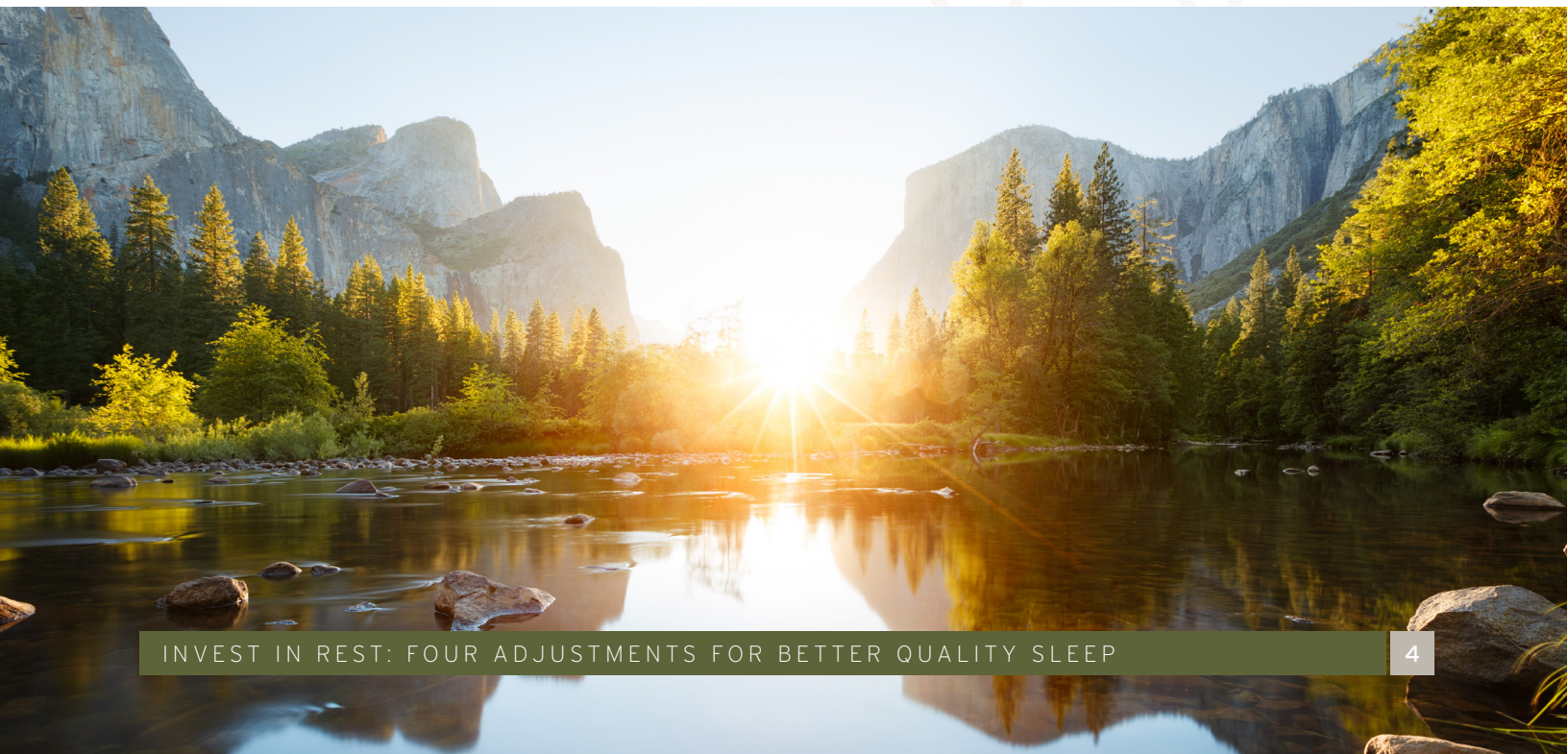
Upon waking, our heart rates immediately rise. Hence, when someone wakes up in the middle of the night with an increased heart rate, it makes it even more likely for them to experience low-quality sleep, and even more susceptible to cardiovascular disease. Breathing exercises can help bring heart rates back down to a level that is conducive to good sleep.

Dr. Breus recommends trying “four, seven, eight” breathing. This calls for breathing in for a count of four, holding your breath for seven seconds, and breathing out for eight seconds. After doing this for 10-12 cycles, your heart rate should lower to below 60 beats per minute. Not only does this strategy lower your heart rate, but it also can help distract the mind from concerns that might be contributing to the restless sleep.

Reach Out

Hear more of Dr. Breus’ insights on sleep disorders and better rest by tuning in to **[“Sleeping Soundly: Your Guide to Better Rest with Dr. Michael Breus.”](#)**

Please consider reaching out to your financial professional for help easing some of life’s worries that may be contributing to your sleep troubles.





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440 MAMARONECK AVENUE
SUITE 506
HARRISON, NY 10528
(914) 825-8630
HIGHTOWERWESTCHESTER.COM

¹Meadows, A., & Meadows, A. (2023, December 8). Oversleeping. Sleep Foundation. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/oversleeping>

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