







repairs itself. During childhood growth occurs primarily during sleep. Adequate sleep is necessary for healthy immune function, which is in part why so many students end up sick soon after a week of exams and sleep deprivation (the other part may or may not be due to the post-exam parties). Over a long term, not getting enough sleep may contribute to high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes.

Insufficient sleep may also impact your psychological well-being, including: poor memory, poor judgment, fatigue, and increased risk of accidents. As sleep deprivation continues, feelings of sadness and exhaustion increase and bouts of irritability and anger are more frequent. So when you fail your exam after pulling four consecutive all-nighters, you're probably going to feel even worse about it than you would normally, if that's possible.

A small study recently published in Behavioral Sleep Medicine found that students who engage in all night study efforts actually end up with a worse GPA (Thatcher, 2008). Next time your suite mate brags about the all nighter she pulled, feel free to chuckle and volunteer this information.

Many college students do not sleep well. A recent study found that among a random sample of students at a public university:

- Most students reported later bedtimes and wake-up times on weekends than on weekdays (shocking, we know)
- 33% took longer than 30 minutes to fall asleep
- 43% woke more than once nightly
- More than one third said they were tired during the day

(Forquer et al, 2008)

In spite of all of the above...

“DON'T LOSE SLEEP OVER NOT BEING ABLE TO SLEEP.” (Statement credited to William Dement, the father of sleep medicine)

Sleep, like adequate nutrition, is necessary for optimal health. However, obsessing over the sleep you're not getting can actually keep you awake. On the other hand, adopting a few healthy sleep habits will allow your brain to get into the sleep groove. This program will teach you how to make good lifestyle choices to make sleep easy.

### **Practice suggestion:**

For this week, begin using the following sleep log. Print and keep it in a place where you can fill it out quickly every morning, or as early as possible after getting up for the day. You'll be surprised how much of these details you forget as the day goes by. Save your sleep logs because you'll need them to successfully implement this program and to track your progress over the next several weeks.

