



# **Are You A Doctor Who Is Frustrated About Not Getting Enough Sleep?**

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Imagine what it would be like if you started your vehicle and then ran it continuously for most of the hours of each day. It wouldn't take long until you noticed that parts were wearing out and things were not running as well as you might expect.

Well, it's the same thing with your body. If you just keep pushing and pushing and pushing yourself, you will soon find that you are not able to work as well as you expected and will feel like you are wearing down. You might feel lethargic, have problems concentrating or become more emotional that you would if you were rested.

Sleep is an extremely important part of living well. Each person needs to not only have regular uninterrupted periods of sleep but also times when you can rest throughout the day.

Often people get into bad habits that prevent sleep from occurring. Following are some tips to help you assess your situation and develop good sleep hygiene:

1. Plan to get enough hours of sleep every night - We plan our work, play and activities but some people treat sleep as an intrusion into life. It is very important that you stop doing things that steal your sleep time. Turn off the television or computer. Go home from the office. Quit scheduling things that take away from your sleep schedule. Force yourself to go to bed (until you learn to enjoy and value sleep).
2. Establish a routine - Some people benefit from having a warm bath before bed. Others choose to do calm activities such as reading. When you have a regular routine, you will find that sleep will become a natural part of it,
3. Set up a comfortable environment - Your bedroom should only be used for sex and sleep. Remove all the distractions such as televisions and computers. Make sure your room is dark enough and the temperature is appropriate for sleep. If your mattress is not comfortable, replace it. Purchase pillows, sheets and blankets that are comfortable. You might even want to move the furniture around as a symbol of the new habits you are establishing.
4. Practice good self-talk - Many people climb into bed and start thinking about all the things that they did or need to do. They might begin balancing their checkbooks in their head or worrying about a relative. These activities tell your brain to "wake up". Instead of this, tell your brain to "shut down" by saying things like "I am so tired and really look forward to this sleep".
5. Use your imagination - You know what the feeling is when you awake in the morning and don't want to move one inch in case you are cold or fully wake up. When you climb into bed at night, try to recreate those feelings of relaxation.

Set up relaxation times during the day. Perhaps you can enjoy your lunch outdoors. You might just need to sit quietly for a few minutes and let your mind and body relax. I have a love seat and alarm in my office so I can even take a short nap at times.

Sleep should not be viewed as an interruption or tolerance. It is a vital activity that is necessary for you to be able to work at your peak potential.