

THE SLEEP DOCTOR

We were fortunate enough to spend some time with Dr Neil Stanley – the Sleep Doctor (our name, not his). Neil is a consultant at lighting specialists FUTURE Designs and the author of ‘How to Sleep Well’ – and he might just change your life! Here, he reveals a number of commonly held sleep myths...



amount of sleep for you. This is the amount of sleep that allows you to feel awake and vital the next day. If you are sleepy during the day, you are probably not getting enough sleep at night.

There is no such thing as too much sleep.

Like anything else, it is possible to have too much of a good thing, scientific evidence has shown that too much sleep is just as harmful to your health and wellbeing as too little.

You can train your body to need less sleep and reduce your need to four or five hours a night.

Some people naturally need less sleep than others but while you may ‘get by’ on less sleep than you need, you cannot train yourself to ‘need’ less sleep. Just one hour less sleep than you need is likely to negatively impact your health, performance and mood. Longer-term partial sleep deprivation is associated with a greater risk of a number of diseases including heart disease, depression, diabetes and obesity.

Sleeping in separate beds/bedrooms means the relationship is in trouble.

Many people sleep better with the warmth and security of another person next to them, however, much of your sleep disturbance is caused by your bed partner – so some prefer to sleep alone. This is a perfectly natural thing to do and might even improve your relationship because by sleeping better you will be happier, less tired and less resentful of the other person.



If you miss out on sleep during the week you can catch up by having a lie-in at the weekend.

Catching up on missed sleep is important but a lie-in on the weekend can actually add to sleep disruption and increase sleepiness. Our bodies respond better to regular sleep patterns and the weekend lie-in is disruptive to this pattern. This is why getting up on Monday morning can be so difficult!

People need less sleep as they get older.

Older people don’t need less sleep, but they do find it more difficult to get the sleep they need and therefore will find their sleep less refreshing. This is because, as people age, they spend less time in the deep, restful stages of sleep – so their sleep is lighter and consequently they are more easily awakened. Older people are also more likely to have insomnia or other medical conditions that disrupt their sleep.

FUTURE Designs is developing concepts based on Human Centric Lighting, which puts emphasis on the visual and non-visual effects of lighting design. The WELL Building Standard promotes buildings designed specifically for human wellbeing and the betterment of human health. Light is one of the seven areas that WELL covers, and Human Centric Lighting will be one of the future trends to emphasise wellbeing in the workplace.

Dr Neil Stanley will be signing copies of his new book How to Sleep Well on Tuesday 25th September, 5-7pm, at Future Designs new technology hub, The Clerkenwell Lighthouse, Dallington Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1V 0BB.

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