

THE POWER OF SLEEP

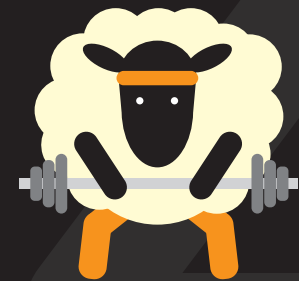
Source: National Collegiate Athletic Association, American College Health Association
Infographic provided by the National Athletic Trainers' Association

Sleep is vital to health and function, especially among student athletes who need be at top performance physically and mentally.

SLEEP IMPACTS

COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE:

- Learning and memory: During sleep, the mind will filter, sort, evaluate, consolidate and integrate information taken in during the day.
- Decision-making: Sleep loss impairs the ability to make decisions and clouds one's judgement so they don't know they're making impaired decisions.
- Vigilance and alertness: When sleep deprived, a person's ability to focus and maintain attention is hindered. As with decision-making, a sleep deprived person is typically unaware of their own impairment.



SLEEP IMPACTS

PHYSICAL HEALTH:

- Healing and recovery: Cells grow, repair and rebuild during sleep, making it essential to athletic performance and injury prevention.
- Metabolism: Sleep controls insulin and glucose functioning, secretion of metabolic hormones and the way fat and muscle cells use and store energy.
- Muscle growth: The healing that takes place during sleep is essential to muscle growth. The human growth hormone is also controlled by sleep.
- Weight control: Poor quality sleep, short sleep durations and sleep that is uncoordinated with internal rhythms can lead to weight gain and obesity—especially in adolescents and young adults who require more sleep.

SLEEP IMPACTS MENTAL HEALTH:

- Stress and anxiety: The body's ability to appropriately control stress and emotions depends on sleep to maintain proper function and without it, the body is less able to process stressful events and is more emotionally out of control.
- Mood and depression: Several functions of sleep involve processing and regulating emotions, tying depression and lack of sleep closely together.



INSUFFICIENT SLEEP AND STUDENT ATHLETES

Most college-aged student athletes experience four nights of insufficient sleep per week on average.

One-third of college-aged student athletes get fewer than seven hours of sleep per night. This rate is higher among female athletes.

Sleep deprivation among college-aged student athletes is often attributed to: frequent travel for competitions; uncomfortable sleeping arrangements; stress; the challenge of balancing athletics, academics and student life; and sleep disorders such as insomnia and sleep apnea.

ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO SLEEP?

Eight hours is the recommended amount of sleep for someone age 17 to 22 for optimal health and function. One way to get better sleep is to create the ideal sleep environment, which is cool, dark and comfortable. Remove any distractions, such as electronics, bright lights and noise.

Contact your medical provider if you're experiencing problems sleeping or if you think you have a sleep disorder.