

Sleep Thieves Hide in Unsuspecting Places

Making sure your body benefits from all the stages of sleep can be a challenge, with so many Americans getting so little sleep each night, but you do not have to be one of the statistics. I recommend keeping a sleep diary because it will enable you to make some key observations in order to determine your true sleep problem.

Complete your sleep diary each morning upon waking. If you are taking sleep aids, please refrain from taking them while you are keeping this sleep diary so that you can know the pure details of your sleep issue. Please be sure to include the following information in your diary:

- The time you went to bed and the time you woke up
- How long it took you to fall asleep
- The times you woke up during the night and how long it took you to fall back asleep
- How much caffeine you consumed during the day and the time that you consumed it
- Anything you ate as a meal or snack in the evening and the time you ate it
- Any naps you took
- Any medications you took
- Rating of the quality of your sleep in terms of restful with no awakenings, to few awakenings, frequent awakenings, awakened but fell back to sleep, and finally, awakened and stayed awake
- Your level of mental alertness when you woke up in the morning (Were you groggy or refreshed?)
- Any physical, emotional, or environmental factors that disturbed your sleep (a snoring spouse, a hot room, television noise, traffic noise, a storm, attending to the needs of a child, stress, recurrent preoccupations,

worrisome thoughts, heartburn, coughing, illness, and so on)

It is best to keep a sleep diary for two to four weeks continuously; date each day. When you awaken in the morning (not in the middle of the night), simply write down your observations before you get out of bed.

By now you've discovered that many of your daily choices can impact your ability to walk in the wonderful blessing of refreshing, rejuvenating sleep. Enjoying rest is a powerful gift from God. Therefore, always look to Him for blessed rest, for He promises to give you sleep. The Bible says, "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep" (Ps. 127:2).

Sleep thieves hide in unsuspecting places—in food, in artificial light, in medication, in exercise, in your bedroom environment, and even sometimes in your sleep partner. Do all you can to eradicate sleep thieves from your nightly routine.

Good sleep hygiene is real. Try to incorporate all 25 habits into your lifestyle of rest.

A sleep diary can help you notice patterns and problems. Use it to track your nightly rest.

This article was excerpted from The Ultimate Sleep Guide: 21 Days to the Best Night of Your Life (Siloam, Charisma House, 2015), by Don Colbert, M.D. The book can be purchased here.

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