

# Sleep Times



## Did You Know

*Medications are not a substitute for healthy habits, and they should be used in addition to following a healthy lifestyle*

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## Message from the President

What's more important for good health, diet or exercise? I have asked myself that question, so the following article caught my eye and I wanted to share it with you. Written by Dr. Bryant Stanford, professor at Hanover College in Indiana, we have reprinted the entire article with his permission. At its conclusion, we have added brief thoughts of our own about the importance of sleep, and feel that it too should be considered when discussing diet and exercise.

Sincerely,  
Mary O'Sullivan  
President

## Diet Adds More Years; Exercise Adds More Life

I know lots of folks who exercise religiously but pay no attention whatsoever to their diet. Conversely, I know lots of folks who are fastidious about their diet, but avoid exercise. If we assume an identical genetic profile for both groups, and if we assume that both groups maintain a reasonable body weight throughout life, who will do better in the longevity department—the exercisers or the healthy eaters? This is a complex issue, and I'll have to oversimplify some things, but let's take a look.

## The Case for Diet

The case for improving diet is gaining momentum whether the issue is heart disease, stroke, cancer or diabetes—our nation's leading killers. Even if diet does not cause obesity, it still can be dangerous. Saturated fat and trans fats lead the way, supported by simple sugars.

All of these items have increased in the American diet over the decades, and along with them, the incidence of lethal chronic diseases. Dr. Dean Ornish, a cardiologist, pioneered the impact of a radical change in diet on heart disease. He demonstrated that a vegan (plant-based) diet loaded with vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and devoid of saturated fat, trans fats and simple sugars, could reverse atherosclerosis, the artery clogging process. Mild exercise in the form of

*Exercise helps you to maintain muscle mass. If you maintain your muscle mass, you also maintain a slightly higher metabolism, and you are able to burn calories more efficiently.*

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comfortable walking is part of his program, but it's used mainly to help with weight reduction and relaxation. Clearly, according to Dr. Ornish, the biggest health bang for the buck comes from changing the diet.

Can lots of exercise compensate for a lousy diet? No. At one time I was staunchly in the exercise camp. I exercised daily, and I pushed myself to exhaustion in every workout. I paid no attention to my diet and ate anything that came my way. Was my heavy exercise program keeping me healthy? Sadly, no. My diet was killing me in many ways, especially with an elevated serum cholesterol level. This inspired my saying: "You can't run away from a bad diet."

As I have studied diet, exercise and health over the years, I have come to the conclusion that if an equation were used to describe the relationships, it would convey that about 80% of good health comes from diet and the remaining 20% comes from exercise. Stress and other factors certainly play a role as well, but I'm setting these aside for now.

## The Case for Exercise

To this point, it seems that exercise is a relatively minor player when it comes to longevity. Maybe so, but it comes down to quality of life issues. Avoiding chronic diseases and living longer by following a good diet means little if you are not able to be a full participant in life. This is where exercise takes center stage.

As we age we lose muscle mass, strength, flexibility and overall physical capacity unless we exercise to avoid it. As our physical capacity declines, everything we do becomes more burdensome. This typically leads to a vicious downward spiral. As you lose capacity and avoid things that challenge you physically, you lose even more capacity, which causes you to avoid more challenges. As such, at the first signs of difficulty, you need to make it a point to do more, not less.

Therefore, although exercise may not in and of itself prevent a heart attack, it can help you survive one. Moderate exercise also is especially helpful in managing type 2 diabetes, because it sensitizes the body's cells to insulin, helping to counter-act the de-sensitizing effect of diabetes.

## The Bottom Line

In a simplistic way, I've made the case that diet may be more important for longevity than exercise. However, while a food diet may add more years to your life, exercise can add more life to your years. Both are indispensable to a long, productive and healthy life.

Written by Dr. Bryant Stanford. Reprinted with permission.

## Quanta Dynamics' Evidence for Sleep

We believe that sleep needs to be included as the third component for a healthy, productive life, because it has a strong connection to both diet and exercise. For instance, a leading epidemic facing our population is being overweight. Recent research indicates that chronic lack of sleep is a major reason why many people are gaining extra weight and eating diets rich in high calorie / high fat / high sugar foods.

When we get inadequate sleep, blood levels of the key appetite-stimulating hormone, ghrelin, are elevated. Excess of this hormone causes the level of the

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stop-eating hormone, leptin, to drop significantly. The result: when we are sleep deprived and feel tired throughout the day, our appetite often increases and we crave high fat / high sugar / high carb foods such as fast foods, soft drinks and snacks (cookies, candy, chips, crackers, etc.) to provide us with quick energy.

Sleep is also strongly connected to exercise in two important ways. When we are fatigued, due to being sleep deprived, we have little incentive to exercise and life really becomes an uphill battle. In addition, daily exercise is key in order to get enough deep, quality sleep. Deep sleep is the time when our bodies are physically repaired and rejuvenated on a daily basis. When we are stressed we often don't get enough deep sleep; however, by getting regular exercise we actually can increase the time we spend in deep sleep.

Our conclusion is that all three: diet, exercise and sleep, are indispensable to a long, healthy and productive life. By eating well, exercising regularly and getting enough quality sleep, we can look forward to many happy and healthy years ahead.

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