



NATIONAL SLEEP
FOUNDATION

Waking America to the Importance of Sleep®

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Longer Work Days Leave Americans Nodding Off On the Job

Sleepy Americans Doze Off At Work, In the Car and On Their Spouses

WASHINGTON, March 3, 2008 — Prolonged work days that often extend late into the night may cause Americans to fall asleep or feel sleepy at work, drive drowsy and lose interest in sex, according to a new *Sleep in America* poll released today by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF). Spending an average of nearly 4.5 hours each week doing additional work from home on top of a 9.5 hour average workday, Americans are working more and are trying to cope with the resulting daytime sleepiness. In fact, 63 percent state they are very likely to just accept their sleepiness and keep going, while 32 percent are very likely to use caffeinated beverages when they are sleepy during the day and more than half (54%) are at least somewhat likely to use their weekends to try to catch up on sleep.

Of those taking their work home with them, 20 percent say they spend 10 or more additional hours each week and 25 percent spend at least 7 additional hours each week on job-related duties. Almost one-quarter (23%) of all respondents did job-related work in the hour before going to bed at least a few nights each week.

Working too much and sleeping too little takes a serious toll on people's professional and personal lives. The poll finds:

- 29 percent of those polled fell asleep or became very sleepy at work in the past month;
- 36 percent have nodded off or fallen asleep while driving, with; 32 percent reporting that they drive drowsy at least 1 to 2 times per month and 26 percent drive drowsy during the workday;
- 20 percent have sex less often or have lost interest in sex because they are too sleepy;
- 14 percent have missed family events, work functions and leisure activities in the past month due to sleepiness;
- 12 percent were late to work in the past month because of sleepiness.

"Nearly 50 million Americans chronically suffer from sleep problems and disorders that affect their careers, their personal relationships and safety on our roads," said Darrel Drobnich, NSF acting chief executive officer. "Longer workdays and more access to colleagues and the workplace through the Internet and other technology appear to be causing Americans to get less sleep. Reciprocally, the effects of sleep loss on work performance are costing U.S. employers tens of billions of dollars a year in lost productivity. It's time for American workers and employers to make sleep a priority."



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THE NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION IS AN INDEPENDENT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY BY ACHIEVING UNDERSTANDING OF SLEEP AND SLEEP DISORDERS AND SUPPORTING SLEEP-RELATED EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY.



Poor Sleep Quality Affects Work Performance

Americans are not getting the sleep they need which may affect their ability to perform well during the workday. More than one-fourth (28%) of those polled say that daytime sleepiness interferes with their daily activities at least a few days each month. And interestingly, though on average people say they need to get 7 hours and 18 minutes of sleep per night to be at their best during the next workday they report only getting an average of 6 hours and 40 minutes of sleep per night on weekdays.

When Americans do go to sleep, they do not sleep long enough nor soundly enough, and these sleep problems may even be affecting the sleep quality of their bed partner.

- Nearly a third (32%) of those surveyed say they only get a good night's sleep a few nights per month;
- 65 percent of Americans report experiencing a sleep problem, such as difficulty falling asleep, waking during the night, and waking feeling unrefreshed at least a few times each week, with nearly half (44%) of those saying they experience that sleep problem almost every night;
- 10 percent of respondents say they use sleep aids - 7 percent use over-the-counter/store bought sleep aids; 3 percent use sleep medications prescribed by a doctor and 8 percent say they use alcohol which they perceive as a sleep aid - at least a few nights each week;
- Nearly half of those polled say that they wake up feeling unrefreshed in the morning (49%) or were awake a lot during the night (42%) at least a few nights each week, and
- One third (33%) say they snore at least a few nights per week, with 26 percent saying they snore almost every night.

“Studies show that habitually getting inadequate sleep -- less than seven or eight hours of sleep each night -- creates long-lasting changes to one's ability to think and function well during the day,” said Thomas J. Balkin, PhD, co-chair of the poll task force and NSF vice chair. “These negative effects can accrue slowly over weeks, months, and even years of inadequate sleep habits and cannot simply be reversed by a few nights of good sleep.”

Long Workday Affects Sleep Quality

The American workday is getting longer and taking work home at the end of the day has become commonplace. The poll results provide a snapshot of the typical American workday:

- 90 percent of Americans work outside of the home, with an additional 8 percent working from home;
- On average, people begin their workday by waking at 5:35 am, and spend about 2 hours and 16 minutes at home before heading off to work;
- The average commute time is 47 minutes round trip;
- Work days are getting longer – one-fourth of respondents (25%) have a workday that lasts between 8 and 9 hours, another fourth (25%) say that they work between 9 and 10 hours each day, and nearly a third of Americans (33%) report working 10 or more hours each day;
- After leaving work, Americans spend approximately five hours awake at home before going to sleep at approximately 10:53 pm;
- However, American workers also report spending an average of 4 hours and 26 minutes doing work from home each week, with 20 percent saying they spend 10 or more hours per week doing extra work from home.

A busy schedule and lack of sleep may also affect people's mood while at work. Forty percent of those polled said that they have become impatient with others at least a few times that month, 27 percent said that they frequently found it difficult to concentrate while at work and 20 percent acknowledged that their productivity at work was often lower than they expected.

“With Americans working such long hours – on top of their other responsibilities like childcare and household maintenance – ‘*something* has to give.’ Unfortunately, that *something* is usually ‘nighttime sleep,’” stated Drobnich. “When work and daily activities demand so much of our time, sleep is often sacrificed. People tend to give up sleep, when getting a good night’s sleep should be at the top of everyone’s list to ensure maximum daytime performance both at work and home.”

Coping with Sleepiness

In today’s fast-paced culture, Americans are somewhat likely to use a variety of behaviors to cope with their sleepiness. In fact, when asked what they do to cope with sleepiness during the day:

- 84 percent say that they just accept it and keep going;
- 58 percent of respondents say they consume caffeinated beverages;
- 38 percent say they choose foods high in sugar and carbohydrates;
- 37 percent say they will later take a nap;
- And, five percent take alerting medications.

Additionally, some respondents choose to adjust their sleep when they are sleepy during the day. Approximately 61 percent say they are at least somewhat likely to go to bed early that night to make up for lost sleep, while 54 percent say they will make up for it by getting more sleep on the weekends, and 37 percent say they take a nap (of approximately one hour duration).

Interestingly, some of today’s employers permit napping at work. More than one third of Americans (34%) say that their workplace permits napping during breaks at work, with 16 percent reporting that their employer even provides a place for them to nap. An additional 26 percent say they would nap on a break at work if their employer were to allow it.

Work Schedule Impacts Sleep

Today, Americans participate in a wide variety of work schedules. This year’s *Sleep in America* poll also sought to examine how different work schedules may impact the quality and quantity of sleep. Following is a breakdown of sleep, alertness and other related behaviors based on work schedule.

Part-Time Workers are predominantly female (63%) compared to those with who work full time or more than one job, according to the NSF survey. Part-time workers report the highest rate of sleep satisfaction, with 48 percent of those saying that they get a good night’s sleep every night or almost every night. That said, however, part-time workers are the most likely to just “accept it and keep going” when they are sleepy (87%). Part-time workers also:

- Report the lowest incidence of symptoms that put them at risk (10%) for insomnia and the lowest incidence of daytime sleepiness interfering in their daily activities (11%);
- Have the lowest incidence of monthly drowsy driving (15%);
- Consume the least caffeine beverages of all the groups (an average of 2.02 cans/cups per day);
- Are most likely to take a nap when sleepy (45%) and take the most naps per month with 56 percent reporting that they nap at least once per month;
- Find their intimate relationships affected by sleepiness (20%);
- Report the highest incidence of symptoms that may indicate restless legs syndrome (17%), and;
- Use sleep aids with the same frequency as those who work full-time (25%).

Full-Time Workers are somewhat evenly split between male and female (58% and 42% respectively). Full-time workers are the group most likely to report getting 8 hours of sleep per night (21%), but 31 percent of this group say that they only get a good night's sleep a few nights per month or less. Of full-time workers:

- More than three-quarters, just “accept it and keep going” when they are sleepy during the workday (84%);
- More than half say they consume caffeine beverages when they are sleepy (59%) with an average of 2.75 cups/cans per day;
- More than half make up for a lack of sleep by sleeping more on the weekends (54%);
- Two in ten say that their intimate relationships are affected by their sleepiness (21%);
- Nearly a third (32%) say they drive drowsy at least once a month, and
- Some (14%) report missing leisure activities or work functions due to sleepiness and (14%) say that their daytime sleepiness interferes in their daily activities at least a few days each week.

Job Jugglers (those who work more than one job) are made up by an even split between men and women (49% male, 51% female). This group reports the highest rate of dissatisfaction with their sleep, with 43 percent saying that they only get a good night's sleep a few nights per month or less. One-fifth (20%) say that daytime sleepiness interferes with their daily activities at least a few days each week and 14 percent report symptoms that put them at the most risk for insomnia. Other characteristics of those who work more than one job include:

- More than one-fifth (22%) report getting less than six hours of sleep per night, with only 14 percent of this group reporting that they get 8 hours of sleep per night;
- Most of this group (86%) say they just “accept it and keep going” when sleepy during the day;
- 23 percent of this group report using a sleep aid at least a few nights per week, interestingly the lowest percentage of all the groups;
- 14 percent of those who work more than one job take naps at work, the highest incidence of at-work napping among the groups;
- Nearly half of those with this work schedule report using caffeine to help them cope with sleepiness, consuming an average of 2.17 cups/cans per day;
- 42 percent say that they have driven drowsy at least once a month in the past year;
- Those in this group report the same high rate of missing leisure and work functions due to sleepiness (14%) as those who work full-time;
- Interestingly, this group is the least likely to report their intimate relationships being affected by sleepiness (12%).

Additional Work Schedules

In addition to those working part-time, full-time and more than one job, many Americans are working extended workdays or doing shift work that requires them to work at unusual times of day. Following is a closer look at the reciprocal relationship between sleep and these unique work schedules.

Extended Hour Workers (More Than 50 Hours per Week) are predominantly male (70% male and 30 % female). One fifth (20%) of those who work more than 50 hours per week say they get less than 6 hours of sleep per night on workdays with 36 percent saying that they only get a good night's sleep a few nights per week or less. Other characteristics of extended hour workers:

- Four in every ten (40%) report driving drowsy at least once a month in the past year.
- The majority of this group (86%) say they just “accept it and keep going” when sleepy during the workday;
- 55 percent say they consume caffeinated beverages to help cope with sleepiness, consuming an average of 2.68 cups/cans per day;

Extended Hour Workers (continued)

- 47 percent of this group say that they never take naps to make up their sleep, but 13 percent say that they nap while at work;
- 28 percent report using a sleep aid at least a few nights each week;
- Those who work more than 50 hours per week report symptoms that put them at high risk for obstructive sleep apnea (16%);

Shift Workers are also predominantly male (70%) with 30 percent of this group reporting that they only get a good night's sleep a few night's per month or less. A third (33%) of shift workers state that they sleep less than six hours per night on workdays with 18 percent of this group reporting a doctor telling them that they have obstructive sleep apnea. Other sleep-related attributes for shift workers include:

- The majority of shift workers (82%) say that they just "accept it and keep going" when they experience daytime sleepiness;
- 67 percent report consuming caffeinated beverages to help cope with daytime sleepiness, consuming an average of 3.02 cups/cans per day;
- 49 percent report consuming foods high in sugar and carbohydrates when experiencing sleepiness, and
- 28 percent report the use of sleep aids;
- Shift workers report high rates of:
 - Drowsy driving with nearly half (48%) reporting that they have driven drowsy at least once per month in the past year;
 - Napping with 64 percent saying that they take one or more naps per month and 16 percent report napping at work;
 - Intimate relationships affected by sleepiness (25%);
 - Daytime sleepiness interfering with their daily activities (21%), and
 - Work injuries, with 19 percent saying that they have injured themselves or had an accident on the job in the past year.

"Similar to diet and exercise, sleep needs to be an integral element of a healthy lifestyle. The impact of not getting good sleep is far reaching and has Americans compromising their productivity, safety, health and relationships – both on the job and at home," states Drobnich. "NSF encourages everyone to learn some basic information about getting better sleep by taking the NSF Great American Sleep Challenge™, Some simple improvements to your sleep environment can help immensely. Learn more at www.sleepfoundation.org/challenge."

Tips for Healthy Sleep

According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately 70 million people in the United States are affected by a chronic sleep disorder or intermittent sleep problem, with women suffering from lack of sleep more often than men and with increasing frequency as they age. If you have difficulty with your sleep for any reason, here are some tips that may help you get a better night's sleep:

1. Try to have a standard relaxing bedtime routine and keep regular sleep times. Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and quiet and that your pillows, sleep surface and coverings provide you with comfort.
2. Exercise regularly, but finish your workout at least three hours before bedtime.
3. Avoid foods and drinks high in caffeine (coffee, colas and tea) for at least eight hours prior to bedtime, and avoid alcohol for a few hours before bedtime. Caffeine and alcohol disturb sleep.
4. Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex; if you do this, you will strengthen the association between bed and sleep. It is best to remove work materials, computers and televisions from the sleep environment.
5. If you experience trouble sleeping on a regular basis, speak to your healthcare professional.

NSF released the poll findings as part of its 11th annual National Sleep Awareness Week® campaign, held March 3-9th. For more sleep tips, information on sleep disorders and a Summary of Findings for the 2008 *Sleep in America* poll, visit NSF's Web site at www.sleepfoundation.org.

Methodology

The 2008 *Sleep in America* poll was conducted for the National Sleep Foundation by WB&A Market Research. Telephone interviews were conducted between September 25 and November 19, 2007, with a targeted random sample of 1,000 Americans. A random sample of telephone numbers was purchased from SDR Consulting, Inc. and quotas were established by region. The response rate for this study was 17% (number of completed interviews divided by the number of completed interviews plus the number of contacted households who refused participation or did not complete appointments, factored by the overall incidence of 71%). The data was weighted to reflect equal proportions of respondents by age based on the U.S. Census. The maximum sampling error of the data for the total sample of 1,000 interviews is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The sampling error will vary depending on the sample size and the percentages being examined in the sample.

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NSF Background

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public health and safety by achieving greater understanding of sleep and sleep disorders. NSF furthers its mission through sleep-related education, research and advocacy initiatives. NSF's membership includes researchers and clinicians focused on sleep medicine as well as other professionals in the health/medical/science fields, patients, people affected by drowsy driving, individuals, and more than 800 sleep clinics throughout North America that join the Foundation's Community Sleep Awareness Partners Network.

NSF's financial support comes from a variety of diverse sources, including memberships, sales of educational materials, advertising, investment income, individual donations, subscriptions, and educational grants from foundations, federal agencies, and corporations including pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical companies. Corporate grants are accepted on an unrestricted basis only. NSF alone determines the ideas and content published or promoted in its educational programs. NSF relies on positions of government agencies, the published consensus of sleep and medical professionals and peer-reviewed, publicized evidence for its public health recommendations. A list of 2007 contributors can be found on NSF's Web site.

NSF does not solicit nor accept funding for its annual *Sleep in America* polls; NSF polls are developed by an independent task force of sleep scientists and government representatives who provide guidance and expertise in developing the poll questionnaire and analysis of the data. NSF can be found online at www.sleepfoundation.org.

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